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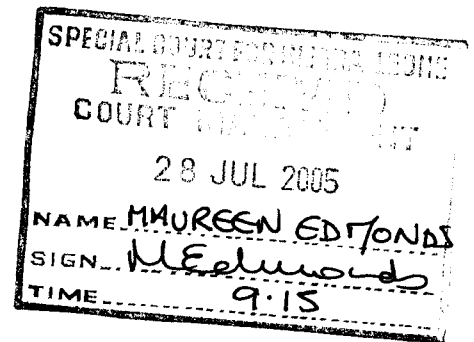
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**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE**  
OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR  
Freetown – Sierra Leone

Before: Justice Pierre Boutet, Presiding  
Justice Bankole Thompson  
Justice Benjamin Itoe

Registrar: Mr. Robin Vincent

Date filed: 27 July 2005



**THE PROSECUTOR**

**Against**

**Samuel Hinga Norman  
Moinina Fofana  
Allieu Kondewa**

Case No. SCSL-04-14-T

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**PROSECUTION FILING IN RELATION TO DOCUMENT 58 "SIERRA LEONE  
CONFLICT MAPPING PROGRAM" (NO PEACE WITHOUT JUSTICE)  
PURSUANT TO ORDER OF 14 JULY 2005**

---

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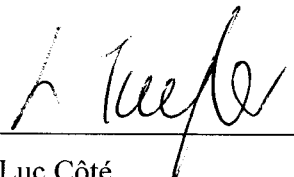
1. On 24 June 2005, the Prosecution filed a Consequential Request to Admit into Evidence Certain Documents Pursuant to Rules 92*bis* and 89(C).
2. The Defence filed a joint Response on 29 June 2005.
3. On 14 July 2005, in its Decision on Prosecution's Request to Admit into Evidence Certain Documents pursuant to Rules 92*bis* and 89(c), the Trial Chamber issued an Order to the Prosecution to file with Court Management the final version of Document 58 "Sierra Leone Conflict Mapping Program" produced by No Peace Without Justice, namely, identified admitted portions as enumerated in the Annex to the Decision as they directly correspond to the final version of the report.<sup>1</sup>
4. The Prosecution hereby files as Annexure A, a statement by Lacey Alison Arnot Smith, formerly Country Director for No Peace Without Justice in Sierra Leone, affirming that the version of *Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone: Violations of International Humanitarian Law from 1991 to 2002* published on the No Peace Without Justice Sierra Leone Mission website is the current and authentic version of this publication to date.
5. The Prosecution will therefore file with Court Management the identified admitted portions of the version of *Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone: Violations of International Humanitarian Law from 1991 to 2002* referred to in the statement by Ms. Smith.
6. Annexed to this filing is a tabular representation of compliance with the Trial Chamber's Order - Annexure B.

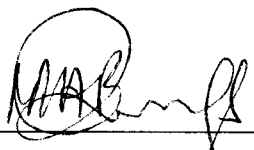
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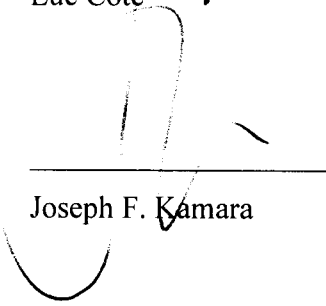
<sup>1</sup> *Prosecutor v. Norman, Fofana and Kondewa*, SCSL-04-14-T, Decision on Prosecution's Request to Admit into Evidence Certain Documents pursuant to Rules 92*bis* and 89(c), 14 July 2005, pp. 5-6.

Dated this 27th day of July, 2005

In Freetown, Sierra Leone

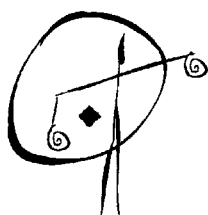
  
for \_\_\_\_\_  
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# ANNEXURE

# A



# NO PEACE WITHOUT JUSTICE

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I, Lacey Alison Arnot Smith, formerly Country Director for No Peace Without Justice in Sierra Leone, hereby affirm that:

1. *Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone: Violations of International Humanitarian Law from 1991 to 2002* was written by L. Alison Smith (as lead and supervising author), Catherine Gambette and Thomas Longley for the international NGO, "No Peace Without Justice". It was issued in a limited release in Freetown on 10 March 2004.
2. *Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone: Violations of International Humanitarian Law from 1991 to 2002* is an authorised publication of No Peace Without Justice.
3. The version of *Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone: Violations of International Humanitarian Law from 1991 to 2002* published on the NPWJ Sierra Leone Mission website<sup>1</sup> is the current and authentic version of this publication to date.

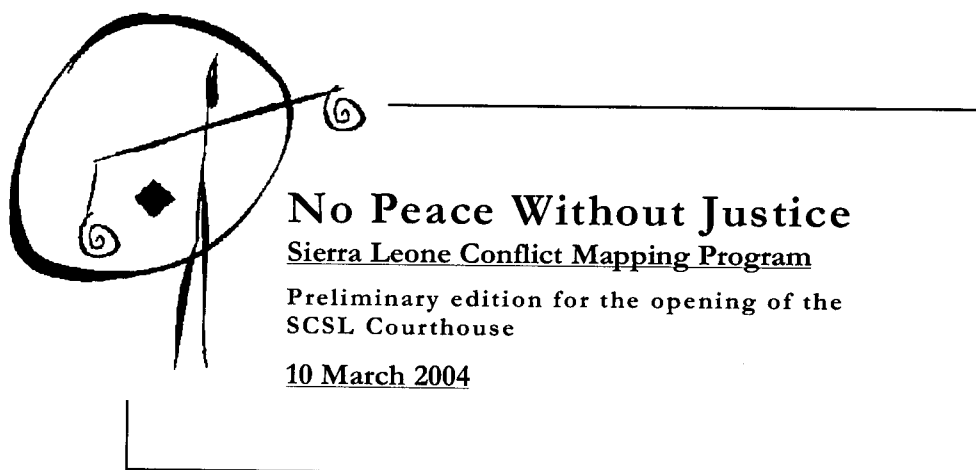
Signed:

L. Alison A. Smith  
Legal Counsel/Coordinator International Criminal Justice Program  
No Peace Without Justice

Done on 21 July 2005 in Venice, Italy

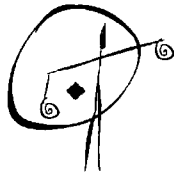
<sup>1</sup> Available through the NPWJ Sierra Leone Mission website on <http://www.specialcourt.org/SLMission/CMFullReport.html>. In addition to the pdf file of the report, that page has for download a winzip file containing the same pdf document encrypted for the purposes of certifying its authenticity: <http://www.specialcourt.org/Outreach/ConflictMapping/NPWJCMReport10MAR04pp.zip>. The password to open the encrypted file is *nopeacewithoutjustice*. This certificate of authenticity refers to that encrypted file, as opened with this password.

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*Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone:  
Violations of International Humanitarian Law from 1991 to 2002*

L. Alison Smith, Catherine Gambette and Thomas Longley, for No Peace Without Justice



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*Conflict Mapping in Sierra Leone:  
Violations of International Humanitarian Law from 1991 to 2002*

No Peace Without Justice wishes to acknowledge the financial assistance of the **European Community** and the **Open Society Initiative - West Africa** to its programmes. The views expressed herein are those of No Peace Without Justice and therefore in no way reflect the official positions of the European Commission or OSI-WA.

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**Cover Design & Publication Layout:** Thomas Longley.

**Maps:** Basemap from Sierra Leone Information Systems (SLIS), Development Assistance Coordination Office, Freetown, Sierra Leone

**Photo Overleaf:** Youths in Segbwema, Kailahun District. Catherine Gambette, 2003.

NPWJ Conflict Mapping Report  
10 March 2004



## FORWARD

The purpose of this report is to examine information gathered in Sierra Leone by No Peace Without Justice's Conflict Mapping Program and analyse it through the lens of international humanitarian law, particularly those crimes within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Special Court.

Accountability exists in many forms and at many levels; this report focuses on accountability for the violation of the laws of war in the belief that it is only by holding responsible those who violate those laws can there be deterrence for future would-be perpetrators. Too often, there are those who argue for the preservation of general amnesties and other guarantees of immunity in the name of "stability" or "moving on"; yet too often, history shows that the only way to achieve real stability and to move forward is to account for what has happened in the past.

Accountability for violations of international humanitarian law for conflicts such as that experienced by Sierra Leone requires more than one avenue; even the formal institutions established for this purpose – the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court – can only do so much. This report hopes to contribute to the accountability process, to the strengthening of the rule of law and to sustainable peace by adding to the historical record of what happened during the long years of the conflict.

The Conflict Mapping Program deliberately took a wide approach: chronologically, it covers the whole period of the conflict and substantively, it covers all violations of humanitarian law, irrespective of whether they are subject to the jurisdiction of Sierra Leone courts or of the Special Court. Thus, it hopes to demonstrate two main things. First, that what happened to the people of Sierra Leone were crimes, whether they are prosecuted or not. Second, to demonstrate that all such crimes are worthy of an account, from the harassment of one person in a remote village, obliged to give all he owns to an invading force, to the systematic killing of hundreds or thousands of people.

The world characterised the conflict in Sierra Leone in two words: diamonds and amputations. For certain, those two factors construct a persuasive framework by painting acts of great horror and ruthlessness against a background of solid greed. However, the conflict was about much more than that, as the facts gathered and analysed for this report show. There is another story of a decade of cruelty and petty humiliations, systematic brutality, murder, theft and exploitation: a million or more tales of human suffering, sadness and loss. The conflict in Sierra Leone was characterised by extreme levels of violence against a civilian population from all sides, even from those supposed to be their protectors. The violence focused on the domination of a country and her resources, particularly her people: the most valuable resource of all.

If the rule of law is to be upheld, the perpetrators of these acts, which are astonishing not only in their brutality but also in their repeating pattern across more than a decade, must be held to account. Such perpetrators rely upon people not watching closely and not speaking out, in keeping quiet and living with fear in their hearts and minds; they rely on the language of "forgive *and* forget". It is hoped that this report goes some small way towards removing the shield of impunity for the planners and perpetrators of such predatory enterprises and that in its reading, the plight not only of the hundreds or thousands killed but also the one person who lost everything will remain in our memory.



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*Through the years we have worked in Sierra Leone, we have made many close and valuable friends. This report is dedicated to two friends who are no longer with us, to **Idrissa Kendor**, one of NPWJ's Conflict Mapping Recorders, and to **Mr S.A. Sankoh**, former Treasurer of the Special Court Working Group, whose enthusiasm and dogged determination are sorely missed.*



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control and allowed further incursions in the rest of the country. The scale of this second wave was acknowledged by the NPRC Chairman himself, who declared “total war against the rebels”. By 1995, all the Districts of the country were directly affected by the RUF incursions.

From 1996 onwards, Kamajors emerged and fought the RUF and later the RUF/AFRC forces in the District. Although they retook control of some RUF-held areas, they never succeeded in taking control of the whole District.

Following the merging of the RUF with the AFRC forces, those CDF members, as in other Districts of the country, went underground before challenging the RUF/AFRC positions by late 1997 but particularly in 1998, following the ECOMOG deployment in Daru. As in 1998, Kamajors were in total control of Pujehun District and the Southern Province in general, thereby cutting off one of the supply roads from Liberia, although not the main one, which was through Koindu (Kissi Teng Chiefdom) in the north-east of Kailahun District. This strong grip over the Southern Province and especially over the Freetown-Kenema and Freetown-Pujehun highways blocked the retreating RUF/AFRC forces from Freetown, preventing them to go to Liberia through Pujehun District and forcing them to reach Kailahun District through Kono District.

RUF/AFRC forces had control over certain areas of Kailahun District, mainly in the north-east of the Moa River and continued engaging the Kamajors, who at that time were assisted by ECOMOG forces. Around this time, many RUF/AFRC forces had regrouped in the District before launching their offensive on Koidu (Kono District) in December 1998. As part of this massive operation, which ended in Freetown on 6 January 1999, RUF/AFRC forces retook position of Segbwema, a strategic town on the main road to Kenema District thus blocking ECOMOG at Daru.

The period following the invasion of Freetown was mainly characterised by political negotiations and reached its conclusion by the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement on 7 July 1999. Although the RUF leader exhorted his members in the District to disarm, a senior RUF officer, then Battle Field Commander and CDS categorically refused and engaged in actions to put a stop to the disarmament process. RUF forces furthermore engaged in cross border raids in the Parrot Beak in Guinea. This action was not isolated as another Guinean flank was open in Kambia District. The peace process was reactivated in November 2000 but more than one year was necessary to complete the disarmament in the District and to declare the war over in January 2002. Kailahun was amongst the last Districts to be disarmed.

### **b. Kenema District**

#### **1. Introduction**

Kenema District is one of the three Districts composing the Eastern Province, together with Kailahun and Kono Districts. It is bordered on the north by Tonkolili District and, mainly, by Kono District, on the east by Kailahun District, on the southeast by Liberia, on the south-west by Pujehun and on the west by Bo District. Its headquarter town is Kenema Town in Nongowa Chiefdom, in the centre of the District. Kenema Town is located on the highway that goes to Koidu (Kono District Headquarter) in one direction and to Bo Town (Bo District Headquarter) and further on to Freetown in the other direction. As in the other Districts of the country, control of the highway was



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of fundamental importance as it is the only way to bring necessary daily items for civilians in the District.

There are 16 chiefdoms in the District:

<u>Chiefdom</u>	<u>Headquarter</u>
Dama	Giema
Dodo	Dodo
Gaura	Joru
Gorama Mende	Tongi
Kandu Leppeama	Gbando
Koya	Baoma
Langrama	Ya Baima
Lower Bamabara	Panguma
Malegowun	Sembehun
Niawa	Sendumei
Nomo	Faama
Nongowa	Kenema
Simbaru	Boajibu
Small Bo	Blama
Tunkia	Gorahun
Wandor	Faala

The Moa River, which takes its source in the ocean in the south of Pujehun District, flows through the southern parts of Kenema District (Koya and Dama Chiefdoms). The Sewa River, coming from Bonthe and Bo Districts, reaches Kenema District in the central east in Kandu Leppeama Chiefdom and continues towards the north, reaching Kono District through Simbaru, Wandor and Gorama Mende Chiefdoms. On its eastern edge, at the border with Liberia, Kenema District is bordered by the Golan Forest.

After Kono District, Kenema District is one of the most important diamond mining areas of the country. The main diamond area, Tongo Field, is to be found in Lower Bambara Chiefdom, but other chiefdoms are also mainly mining areas, such as Kandu Leppeama and Gorama Mende Chiefdoms.

Kenema District was affected by the conflict through three discernible phases. During the first phase, which encompassed 1991 to the end of 1993, Kenema District was attacked by RUF/NPFL forces coming from the south and the east. This phase was marked by widespread violations committed primarily by RUF/NPFL forces, but also by SLA forces. Initially, in the south, there was little resistance put up by the SLA, who were also inflicting violence and terror on the population as part of their "screening" of the population for "rebels". However, towards the middle of 1992, the SLA regrouped and mostly drove the RUF/NPFL forces from their positions back towards Liberia. In the east, the fighting and infliction of violence and terror on the population was more intense, in part because there was a greater concentration of SLA forces due to the location of the SLA brigade headquarter in Kenema Town.



The patterns in both incursions were remarkably similar: the RUF/NPFL forces would gather the people of the villages in the Court Barrie and hold a meeting, toppling the existing authorities and setting up new power structures. Their arrival and stay was accompanied by the infliction of physical and mental violence on the people of the village, as well as the abduction of members of the population, including children, for use as workers, as fighters, as cooks and as "wives". RUF/NPFL forces also engaged in widespread theft and property destruction, notably the burning of houses, particularly when the people had fled the village prior to their arrival. Indeed, there was much internal displacement within the District as some people fled their villages ahead of the arrival of RUF/NPFL forces until mid to late 1992, when the combined SLA and ULIMO<sup>811</sup> forces began retaking control of the District and driving the RUF/NPFL forces out.

The second phase spanned from the end of 1993 until May 1997 with two concurrent incursions, one from the north and one from the south. This period saw the birth of the Kamajors, who were local hunters initially coming together in informal groups before coming under the wing of the CDF. The "Kamajors" began to fight the RUF, alongside the SLA. During this second phase, a lot of civilians were killed, abducted, forced to carry property and work in the diamonds mines; the number of rapes increased. The RUF also set up a number of camps throughout the District, from where they launched attacks on surrounding chiefdoms. These camps were also the sites where they brought abducted civilians and inflicted physical and mental violence on some and trained others to be fighters, including children. Atrocities were mostly carried out by RUF forces but also by SLA members who were actively engaged in mining activities and, to a lesser extent, the Kamajors.

The third and final phase of the conflict in Kenema District ran from May 1997, the date of the Coup that saw the AFRC seize power, until 2002, when the war officially ended across the country. During this time, there were still many incidents of violence against the population both by the RUF/AFRC forces and, to a lesser extent, by the Kamajors. This violence was most pronounced just after the Coup in May 1997, but continued throughout this phase, tapering off towards 2000 in the north, when disarmament began across the District.

## 2. Factual analysis

### a) First Phase: 1991 – end of 1993

The war began in Kenema District as early as 1991, when RUF/NPFL forces entered the District in Tunkia Chiefdom, in the south, from Pujehun District and Liberia, and in the east from Kailahun District, where they entered Malegohun Chiefdom, which shares a boundary with Kailahun District.

### *Southern incursion*

In April 1991, armed men identified as RUF/NPFL fighters (the NPFL, by their Liberian accent) entered Tunkia Chiefdom<sup>812</sup> in the south of the District from Pujehun District through the Golan forest and, to a limited extent, from bordering Liberia. After gathering people at the Court Barrie or

<sup>811</sup> This fighting faction, composed mainly of supporters of the late previous Liberian President, Samuel Doe, emerged in May 1991 to fight the NPFL, which was led by Charles Taylor.

<sup>812</sup> The chiefdom headquarter is Gorahun, located on the Kenema–Bo Waterside (Pujehun District) road. Gegbwema and Jao are two major towns in the chiefdom.



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in a school field, these forces introduced themselves as the people's "redeemers and liberators" from the APC Government.

Coming from Makpele Chiefdom (Pujehun District) in April, RUF/NPFL forces attacked the chiefdom headquarter of Gorahun. Some of these forces had leaves tied around their wrist. This is a symbol of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party<sup>813</sup> (SLPP) and it is reported that this was done to gain the support of the people of Tunkia Chiefdom, since it was common knowledge that Tunkia was an SLPP stronghold. After taking control of the city, the RUF/NPFL appointed new chiefdom authorities and began looting houses. SLA forces from Kenema Town repelled them for a while but they came back shortly afterwards.

RUF/NPFL forces also entered the chiefdom from Liberia, through Tolo, and rapidly advanced into the chiefdom, harassing and molesting the population, inflicting physical violence, looting, killing and raping. When they arrived at Tolo, where RUF/NPFL forces stayed two days before proceeding further, they burnt some houses and killed civilians. At Tigbwema, RUF/NPFL forces burnt houses but did not meet the inhabitants as they had already left the town. At Mano Jeigbla, one man was shot and wounded and two young women were taken as "wives".<sup>814</sup>

At this time, SLA troops had recently arrived in Gegbwema, in the north of Tunkia Chiefdom, to brief the local authorities on security issues. However, when the RUF/NPFL forces approached the town and started firing, the SLA left Gegbwema, allowing RUF/NPFL forces to take control of the town without any armed opposition. One of the commanders of the RUF/NPFL forces told the people that they had come to unseat the APC Government. The day after they had arrived, chiefs from Jao (located in the centre of the chiefdom), Kamasu and the surrounding villages came to the town, unaware that the town had fallen into the hands of the RUF/NPFL, because they had previously been called upon for a meeting by the SLA Major. When they arrived, they were arrested by RUF/NPFL forces, undressed and forced to lie on the ground and look at the sky for a long time. These authorities were then told to go back to their towns, escorted by RUF/NPFL forces, and return to Gegbwema with food items.

On their arrival in Jao, one group of RUF/NPFL forces settled there due to the large number of cattle in the town. During their stay at Jao, they forced civilians to cook for them and an unknown number of women were forced to have sex with RUF/NPFL personnel. Joru, Gaura Chiefdom headquarters was attacked many times during that period but without success. In June, Guinean forces<sup>815</sup> who were deployed at Joru launched heavy missiles on RUF/NPFL positions in Tunkia Chiefdom. This led RUF/NPFL forces to leave the chiefdom for Zimmi (Makpele Chiefdom, Pujehun District), together with some civilians.

After their departure, people started coming back out of the bush to their villages and SLA and ULIMO forces were deployed at Jao and Gegbwema. However, many people were afraid to leave

<sup>813</sup> At this time, the SLPP was the opposing party to the APC regime.

<sup>814</sup> A term used by RUF/NPFL forces to denote women who they would abduct and force to perform domestic tasks and have sex with them.

<sup>815</sup> Guinean and Nigerian forces, deployed in the country under bilateral treaties with Sierra Leone, fought alongside the SLA.



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the bush, because the RUF/NPFL had told them that the SLA would kill them if they found them in places previously occupied by RUF/NPFL forces. As a result of their belief that they would be killed by the SLA, some people went to Zimmi with the RUF/NPFL forces.

Furthermore, there was also harassment of civilians by the SLA. In one incident, SLA forces assaulted a civilian from Jao, accusing him of being a “rebel”, beating his head with the butt of a gun and threatening to cut his throat. An SLA commander who knew him intervened, saving his life. At that time, Jao was hosting thousands of people who had come from various villages to avoid RUF/NPFL forces. During their stay, SLA forces routinely carried out a practice known as “screening”, checking that people coming to the villages were not “rebels”. During the rest of the year, there were two other attacks on Gorahun where SLA forces repelled the unidentified assailants.

In July 1991, the chiefdom was attacked again at Gorahun. SLA forces fought RUF/NPFL forces before withdrawing. Subsequently, SLA forces deployed at Jao and Gegbwema also withdrew. Consequently, thousands of civilians left the chiefdom for safer havens such as Kenema Town, where they received information of attacks and the burning of villages in the chiefdom. In September, the SLA mobilised its troops, driving the majority of RUF/NPFL forces from positions in the chiefdom back to the Liberian border. After these last attacks, Tunkia Chiefdom was quiet for two years until hostilities resumed in December 1993.

### *Eastern incursion*

In 1991, Kenema Town was an SLA brigade headquarter and the Major in charge was responsible for arms and ammunition for the war front in Kailahun District.

In May 1991, the war, which had previously been contained in Kailahun District, spilled over into Malegohun Chiefdom (north of the District, sharing a border with Kailahun District). A few days after they had taken control of Bunumbu (Peje West Chiefdom, Kailahun District), RUF/NPFL forces entered Ngiehun (Malegohun Chiefdom). Before their arrival, a lot of people had left, hearing terrific news such as killing of sick people to save them from suffering or killing of the most frightened ones so that they do not create fear in the others. Fighters searched the bushes to bring back civilians to the town. Following the usual pattern of gathering the village in the Court Barrie, a Town Commander, a Deputy Commander and a clerk were appointed and a committee was set up. Two men were executed and some women were taken to become their “wives”.

The Town Commander conscripted manpower, swelling the ranks of the RUF/NPFL forces and enabling them to take control over other sections (the chiefdom has seven sections). After taking Konjo Buema Section, RUF/NPFL forces controlled Konjo Njagore and Konjo Yematanga Sections.

Following a disagreement with the Town Commander,<sup>816</sup> a local RUF commander removed all the people he had previously appointed from power. Four days later, his forces came back to the town to arrest the elders. However, the elders had left and the town was deserted, so the RUF/NPFL

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<sup>816</sup> On hearing that the Town Commander had sent two of his men to remove chairs from the College at Bunumbu for his house, a more senior local commander followed these two men and killed them, entering Ngiehun with his men the following day.



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forces burn down 19 houses. The RUF/NPFL forces who were in Ngiehun moved to Bunumbu (Peje West Chiefdom, Kailahun District) and intermittently patrolled the three sections in Malegohun Chiefdom that were under their control.

After these first attacks, 1992 saw RUF/NPFL activities expanding mainly in the chiefdoms of Koya, Dama and Niawa in the south of the District. Some activities were also reported in the chiefdoms of Small Bo, Gorama Mende and Lower Bambara, in the east of the District on the boundary with Bo District.

Several civilians were killed in February 1992 during SLA attacks on the headquarters of the three sections of Malegohun Chiefdom under RUF/NPFL control. SLA forces remained there, fighting to repel RUF/NPFL attacks. When SLA forces cleared Bunumbu (Peje West Chiefdom, Kailahun District), Ngiehun became calm and people began to return from the bush.

Gorama Mende Chiefdom is a hilly and forested chiefdom, bordered on the west by Bo District, on the north by Tonkolili District, on the east by Kono District and on the south by Wandor Chiefdom. Its location near Kono District, its forest vegetation and the wealth of its soil, in particular the diamonds, made the chiefdom ripe for bush warfare. However, like Lower Bambara and Small Bo Chiefdoms, Gorama Mende was barely affected during the first phase of the conflict. In February 1992, five armed men coming from the direction Jaiama Sewafe (Nimiyama chiefdom, Kono District) reached Punduru, a large town at the border with Nimiyama Chiefdom. Their mission appeared to be have been to carry a message informing people of the aims and objectives of the RUF/NPFL, as they stated people should not be afraid because they had come to redeem them from the oppressive ruling party. However, when they had entered the village, an old woman who threw verbal insults at the RUF/NPFL forces was shot dead.<sup>817</sup>

Niawa Chiefdom in the south-west of the District was attacked for the first time in 1992,<sup>818</sup> although the headquarter town of Sendumei was not affected. On 22 April, RUF forces<sup>819</sup> coming from Kandorhun (Barri Chiefdom, Pujehun District) through Langrama Chiefdom attacked Gandorhun in the south of Niawa Chiefdom. Upon entering the town, they appointed new Town Commanders for Gandorhun and its surrounding area. After going back for couple of days to Potoru (Barri Chiefdom, Pujehun District), they returned to Gandorhun, from where they launched attacks in villages in the south of the chiefdom and in the north of Langrama Chiefdom.<sup>820</sup> All these attacks took place in April. After this first visit in Gandorhun, RUF fighters came back to the town three days later, as they had promised they would.

At Ngolahun Vaama, civilians were killed, some houses were burnt and six girls together with five underage boys were taken away. At Gandorhun, young girls were raped and a ten year-old girl was

<sup>817</sup> Although no RUF presence was noted in Nimiyama Chiefdom (Kono District) in early 1992, it is possible that a pocket of RUF members coming from this direction reached Punduru.

<sup>818</sup> In Niawa Chiefdom, the following villages were assaulted by RUF/NPFL forces: Ngolahun Vaama, Woroma, Kponima, Kerga, Menila and Buwema.

<sup>819</sup> NB: On the identification of the fighters, key persons mention only the term "rebels" and RUF. No mention of NPFL. However, it is said that one of the commander was a Liberian.

<sup>820</sup> In Langrama Chiefdom, as well as Yebeima, which is the first village after the border, Wanjama, Menima Langrama and Marker were attacked.



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killed. Her father was also threatened with death if he ever smiled any time they came back to the town. In another place, civilians were killed, some women raped and taken as their wives and few houses were burnt. In all the villages, property was taken. At Ngolahun Vaama, some houses were burnt and two people in two houses were burnt. Hearing that SLA forces were preparing to attack them, some of the RUF/NPFL forces went to Ngolahun Menila, hiding their identity, and were told that inhabitants were waiting for the SLA forces, for whom they had prepared food. Following this, RUF/NPFL forces attacked the town, inflicting physical violence on people, breaking doors and taking property. There were few killings at this time, apparently because the commander was mainly looking for the Chief to join their movement. A civilian who had been appointed the Town Commander of Gandorhun was killed during the attack, allegedly for hiding his people (civilians) whenever RUF forces came to the town. It is reported that the new Town Commander was doing what the rebels asked him to do. During his term, many young girls were raped and the stealing of food was commonplace.

Lower Bambara Chiefdom, located in the north of the District at the border with Kono District, comprising seven chiefdoms is well known for cash crops including cocoa, coffee and palm oil and, above all, for Tongo Field, its diamond area. Villages within this area such as Bomi, Gehama, Tokbambu, Tongola, Lalehun and Vandema are devoted to mining activities. Lower Bambara Chiefdom was affected to a limited extent during the first phase of the war and few incidents are reported, one around May 1992 and the other one at the end of the year. During the May attack, fighting forces wearing military uniforms and t-shirts and writing "RUF" on the walls of the houses attacked the diamond-mining town of Weima from Malegohun Chiefdom in the east. Civilians were killed and others were forced to carry loads.

Shortly after the overthrow of the APC Government, Dama Chiefdom authorities made an appeal to the Defence Minister to send SLA forces to the chiefdom. Dama shares a boundary with Jawei Chiefdom (Kailahun District). SLA and ULIMO forces were deployed to Konia, on the border with Nongowa Chiefdom and Jawei Chiefdom (Kailahun District), where they established a base. Soon after, Tawahun was attacked by RUF forces, most of them speaking Krio and coming from Jawei Chiefdom. Most of the forces were dressed in civilian attire, with some in military fatigue, as the RUF had begun to use military uniforms in 1992. During this attack, some civilians were killed, one woman's breast was cut off and a family was burnt in their house.

Around May 1992, Sahun and Sherif Jembehun were also attacked. An unknown number of civilians were killed and all the important buildings were burnt down. Also in 1992, a civilian vigilante movement started operating in the chiefdom under the command of the SLA. They were armed with axes, cutlasses and single barrel guns, sent to checkpoints and asked to shout when assailants were approaching.

However, despite the presence of SLA forces in the chiefdom, attacks were still carried out until the early days of 1993, during which RUF forces mutilated civilians, including carving "RUF" on their bodies.<sup>821</sup>

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<sup>821</sup> This statement is general and unique and no more information is available on it.



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In September 1992, ULIMO forces launched a powerful attack on Gandorhun (Niawa Chiefdom) and retook control of both Niawa and Langrama Chiefdoms. Almost two months later, they handed over their base to SLA forces, who were still stationed there when RUF forces attacked the chiefdoms again in March 1994.

During the end of the year, a large number of RUF/NPFL<sup>822</sup> forces attacked Konjo (Lower Bambara Chiefdom), but were repelled by SLA forces. A lot of civilians and RUF/NPFL forces were killed during the encounter. RUF/NPFL forces took a lot of property and the people of the nearby villages, such as Njaiagbahun and Venema, fled into the bush for several weeks. By the end of 1992, the population of Small Bo Chiefdom swelled as displaced people fleeing Barri Chiefdom (Pujehun District) sought refuge there.

An Eastern Region Civil Defence Committee, comprised of representatives from Kailahun, Kenema, Kono Districts and Freetown Peninsula was formed in December 1992, aiming at supporting the SLA by gathering "well-meaning" Sierra Leoneans, whose role would be of a vigilante nature.<sup>823</sup> The youths' knowledge of the terrain would be used to lead the SLA.<sup>824</sup>

In 1992 and 1993, ULIMO forces used Blama (Small Bo Chiefdom) as their base to fight RUF forces in other chiefdoms and were living peacefully with the population there. However, in 1992, coming back from Yibeima (Langrama chiefdom), some ULIMO members, to manifest their bravery, displayed severed male genital organs, claiming they were those of "rebels" they had killed. However, it is reported that this claim was later proved to be false and that the people who were killed were actually civilians. Although following this event, people of the chiefdom wanted them to leave, they were sent back in mid 1993 by the NPRC Government.

Koya Chiefdom, in the south of the District, was left in the hands of the RUF forces, as no SLA or ULIMO forces were stationed or deployed there. People of the chiefdom felt totally neglected. Koya would later be notorious for hosting one of the main RUF bases, Camp Zogoda, meaning "Land of Freedom."<sup>825</sup> Starting in May 1992 until 1994, there were massive violations committed in various villages in Koya Chiefdom, resulting in the death and abduction of hundreds of civilians. RUF forces entered the chiefdom headquarter town of Baoma in May 1992, gathered the population in the Court Barrie and opened fire, killing about two hundred people. Women are reported to have been raped "at will" and the town was set on fire before they left. The forces then proceeded to other villages and towns,<sup>826</sup> where they repeated the same course of action: killing dozens of civilians, raping women and looting and burning houses before leaving. They stayed in Nyadehun from June until September and then moved to Pelewama, where they occupied the town until December. In each of these towns, before killing people, they asked civilians to tell them where SLA members were. In January 1993, they crossed the Moa River and occupied Serabu and its surroundings until September 1993 before moving to Kamasu until December.

<sup>822</sup> It is specified that some of the assailants were talking with Liberian dialect.

<sup>823</sup> BBC: 22 December 1992.

<sup>824</sup> Youths in the context of Sierra Leone could refer to anybody aged over 15 up to their mid to late 30s.

<sup>825</sup> The report does not specify in which of Sierra Leone's languages "Zogoda" has a meaning. Most likely Mende or Temne.

<sup>826</sup> Borgboabu, Giema, Maporma, Segbwema, Gorahun, Njaluahun, Bongor and Nyadehun.



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Because SLA forces had driven almost all the RUF/NPFL forces from most of the District by the end of 1992, 1993 was relatively calm until the end of the year. The last months of 1993 mark the beginning of what can be labelled the second phase of the conflict, with the resumption of RUF/NPFL activities in Tunkia, Nomo and Gaura Chiefdoms.

b) Second Phase: End of 1993 – May 1997

This second phase started in December 1993 when RUF forces entered Nomo Chiefdom, on the border with Liberia. Those forces rapidly spread over the south of the Moa River, which flows from Pujehun District to Kailahun District through Koya and in the west of Dama chiefdom, and expanded their activities further north by crossing the river. Concurrently to this southern incursion, RUF forces entered the north of the District, attacking Lower Bambara Chiefdom.<sup>827</sup>

***Southern incursion***

During this phase, Moawama area, made up of Nomo, Gaura, Tunkia and Koya chiefdoms, was the first area to be affected. The majority of villages in these chiefdoms were devastated and most of the civilians moved to Kenema Town and further north.

On 1 December 1993, the Head of State unilaterally announced a one-month ceasefire, which allegedly led many SLA forces to leave their positions thinking the war was over. However, towards the end of December 1993, RUF/NPFL forces crossing the Mano River from Liberia attacked Nomo Chiefdom,<sup>828</sup> bordered on the east by Liberia. Shortly after their attack on Faama in the west of the chiefdom, RUF/NPFL forces proceeded further into the District and had reached Tunkia, Gaura and Dama Chiefdoms by early March 1994. When RUF forces attacked Faama, civilians and SLA forces who were deployed there suffered heavy losses. The SLA forces retreated, leaving a large cache of arms and ammunition in the hands of RUF forces, which would allow the RUF forces to spread all over the District. Doubts were also raised among civilians and some people were suggesting that SLA left this cache of arms on purpose.

On the following days, other towns in Nomo Chiefdom came under attack, including Kpendebu, Madina and Loawoma. During these attacks, civilians were killed and others were forced to carry stolen property, some to the border town of Dambala. At Madina, civilians gathered in the Court Barrie were forbidden to sleep in their houses for three days and were threatened to be killed if they were caught trying to escape. One young trader accused of carrying out reconnaissance for the SLA was shot dead. The town was surrounded and property was taken.

Beleibu (Tunkia Chiefdom) was attacked during the same period on Christmas Day in 1993. Some civilians were killed and half of the village was burnt down. The same day, RUF forces advanced

<sup>827</sup> It could not be ascertained whether the north attack derived from the south one or whether the North and the South constituted two different fronts. As no troops movement from the south-east of the District to the north (Lower Bambara Chiefdom) was recorded, it could be concluded that those two attacks constituted two different flanks. However, if those flanks were autonomous, the north attack would have come from Kailahun District where no movement of troops were recorded and where RUF forces started to gain territories on the SLA around March only, i.e. two months after the attacks on Lower Bambara Chiefdom. Furthermore, it cannot be inferred from the reports whether these forces joined at one point.

<sup>828</sup> Nomo has only nine villages and its headquarter town is Faama.



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towards Jao (Tunkia Chiefdom). On their way, they found two Kamajors, one at Nomo Tunkia Junction and another one at Kokoru, both of whom were instantly killed. At Jao, inhabitants were gathered and forced to sit on the ground; some were stripped naked, kicked and beaten. After looting Jao, RUF forces moved to Gegbwema where they burnt the military post and some went to Tijoyeima, where they burnt some houses. Before reaching Gegbwema, they stopped at Jewahun where they looted and burnt houses. Nobody was killed, as the inhabitants had left the town before their arrival.

Also in December 1993, Gaura Chiefdom came under attack. The chiefdom headquarter of Joru, where the SLA was stationed, was the setting of many attacks and counter attacks. SLA forces from Joru fought the assailants in the chiefdom and came back to the town with the head of a man, who they claimed was an RUF fighter, hanging on the front on their vehicle. Two other members, both from Burkina Faso and fighting for the NPFL, were captured and placed in custody.<sup>829</sup>

SLA forces coming from Moa Barracks, Daru (Jawie Chiefdom, Kailahun District) recaptured Faama (Nomo Chiefdom) from the RUF, who launched another unsuccessful attack in mid January 1994. Some civilians who had previously returned to Faama were trapped by RUF forces and killed.

At the end of January 1994, the Head of State declared "total war" against the RUF and engaged in a massive recruitment of SLA forces; from 3,000 men in 1991, they reached around 12,000 in 1994.

The behaviour of SLA forces towards civilians was not acceptable to some of the chiefs and other elders who had stayed in the chiefdom, who were arrested and detained to answer allegations of "collaboration". Some civilians were also regularly beaten up in Faama for allegedly convening a meeting without giving notice to the SLA.

Early 1994, RUF forces regrouped at Kokoru and bypassed Joru to attack Venima (5 miles west of Joru). They were then led by a civilian who took them to other villages, including Gboyama, Madina, Tanima and Verma, where they were hosted by the Town Chief and another local authority. ULIMO forces coming from Joru repelled the RUF forces and brought the two local authorities from Verma back to Joru, where they were stripped naked. The Town Chief allegedly faced a firing squad but he did not die, was tied up and taken into custody. The other local authority was brought to Kenema Town then to Freetown, where he was imprisoned. In April 1994, the villages of Sandaru, Nyandeyama, Mendekelema and Seifula (Gaura Chiefdom) came under RUF attack. The only actions reported concern Sandaru (north of the chiefdom), where RUF forces captured some young men, whose age could not be ascertained, to carry the property they had stolen. When they left Sandaru, RUF forces promised that they would come back at night or the next morning, returning early the following day.

On the walls of the houses at Faama (Nomo Chiefdom) and Madina, RUF forces inscribed the acronym "RUF".

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<sup>829</sup> What happened to them after during and after their custody was not reported.



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Dama Chiefdom, west of Gaura Chiefdom and where many civilians from Moawama had taken refuge at one time, came under RUF attack in 1994.<sup>830</sup> At Torgboru, some civilians were killed by these forces. Gbewubu and Loppa were attacked. At Loppa, an unspecified number of civilians were killed with automatic guns and others were captured. During those attacks, some of these RUF members had their faces painted so they would not be recognised, because some of them were former SLA members. Other villages including Lelema, Konnehla, Kpandebu, Korma and Konia were attacked, mainly for looting purposes and civilians were most often forced to carry the loads. The RUF forces also killed a number of people, inflicted physical violence on the population and engaged in property destruction. At Konnehla, for example, men were captured to carry stolen property and one man who became tired and unable to continue carrying the load was killed. Korma was burnt down and at Kpandebu many people were killed, either shot or beaten to death. Some civilians were told to bury the bodies. At Konia, one pregnant woman was raped and gave birth instantly after. At Mano in June, RUF forces who were dressed in combat uniforms gathered the inhabitants in the Court Barrie and requested that they stand, placing guns very close to the civilians' ears and then firing, killing one old man. The RUF also forced the people of the village to lie down on the ground and look at the sun. Three civilians were killed when they attempted to run away. As they left the village, RUF forces took away all the cattle and poultry.

According to their inhabitants, Small Bo, Niawa and Langrama Chiefdoms form a block such that events occurring throughout this phase in one of these chiefdoms have a link with what happened in another one. RUF forces reached these chiefdoms early 1994 and launched attacks on many villages throughout the year, which led the population to flee the area for displaced camps in Bo Town (Kakua Chiefdom, Bo District), Gerihun (Boama Chiefdom, Bo District) and Taiama (Kori chiefdom, Moyamba District).

In early March 1994, RUF forces crossed the Moa River in Koya Chiefdom and attacked Jai and Menima (Koya Chiefdom).<sup>831</sup> From Menima, at the border with Niawa Chiefdom, RUF forces divided into two groups, both going to Niawa chiefdom, the first one heading for Ngandorhun in the south of the chiefdom and the second one going to Bandawor at the border with Koya Chiefdom.

While on their way to Ngandorhun, the first group of RUF forces ambushed and killed a prominent local hunter with sticks and knives. They then moved to Yibeima, in the north of Langrama Chiefdom by the Waanje River. They attacked the town for the first time on 6 March. RUF forces entered Yibeima heavily armed with AK47s, RPGs and grenades and killed three civilians; one person was killed because he was speaking a language that the fighters could not understand. The RUF forces then returned back to Ngandorhun after making a promise to Yibeima inhabitants that they would come back on 8 March, which they did.<sup>832</sup>

<sup>830</sup> The months when the reported attacks took place could not be ascertained. Furthermore, although no precise example was reported, it was however stated that the same kind of attacks also happened in 1995.

<sup>831</sup> The fact that many reports mention this date adds to the confusion concerning Koya chiefdom as according to the report for Koya, RUF forces had crossed the Moa River, before March 1994. Furthermore, the group that came to Niawa and Langrama Chiefdoms in March 1994 was different from the one allegedly in Koya Chiefdom.

<sup>832</sup> No details were given for this second attack and fatalities – if any – are not specified.



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They then moved to Woyema (Langrama Chiefdom), where they made a base from which they could attack the surrounding villages. Their intention in Woyema appeared to be to capture the Section Chief, but as he was nowhere to be found, six houses were burnt, 10 men and women captured and one civilian, a carpenter, was killed. They also entered Menima (Langrama Chiefdom), where they killed two civilians, raped three women, burnt some houses and captured civilians. They then returned to Woyema and killed one Muslim leader because he was praying day and night for his village not to be attacked. While in Woyema, people were forced to do community work like brushing the area and preparing the rice farms. Window frames and doors were used as cooking wood. From Woyema, RUF forces launched attacks on Small Bo Chiefdom.

The second group that headed for Bandawor, at the border with Koya Chiefdom, used a bush footpath through Nyandehun, where they killed three civilians, raped some women and burnt some houses. Sendumei was attacked on 4 March 1994 early in the morning, when residents heard a heavy exchange of fire with SLA forces. During this attack, civilians were killed and girls were raped. The heavily armed RUF forces entered Bandawor in the afternoon, set the town on fire and gathered civilians under a tree near the main street that leads to Small Bo Chiefdom. A few armed men guarded the gathered civilians while others went into the town, raped, looted and killed nine civilians.

In the forest of Bandawor (Koya Chiefdom), the RUF forces built a camp they named Camp Zogoda. This camp was a strong base, where the RUF leader allegedly stayed in 1994. An airfield was also established between Menima and Jai (both located in Koya Chiefdom). The RUF forces used this camp to launch attacks on Small Bo Chiefdom and they also laid ambushes on the Bo-Kenema highway, despite vehicles being escorted by SLA vehicles, and on the roads going through rural areas. Many civilians were killed during these attacks, property was taken and vehicles burnt.<sup>833</sup> Serious doubts were raised among the population as to the identity of those assailants.

One of these ambushes, which took place in April 1994 at a hilly position close to Joru (Gaura Chiefdom) called Kwalekpehun, is illustrative of how RUF forces were operating at that time. RUF forces hiding in the bush used RPGs to attack convoys of passenger vehicles that were escorted by SLA forces. The commander ordered the passengers to lie down on the ground and an exchange of fire followed, during which three civilians were killed. When the firing stopped, the civilians boarded and no sooner had the vehicle ascended the hill than firing from the bush resumed. During this second attack, the SLA members left the convoy to get some reinforcements from Joru. Some civilians were killed, some injured and others were captured, pushed out of the vehicle and beaten with the butts of rifles. In the bush where they were taken, they met other civilians. All the passengers were searched for anything valuable or of interest to the forces. Two young men believed to be Fullah traders were shot at a close range. One died instantly and had his stomach cut open. One of the captives was asked to take the names of all the captured civilians who were allocated different jobs like conveying the wounded fighters to Gegbwema, carting the goods looted from the vehicles or taking the armour boxes. Another example occurred in March 1994, when an ambush was laid between Blama and Lungima, a town two and half miles from Blama. A trailer carrying load of rice was looted and the 350 bags of rice taken away. In another incident on 14 March 1994, one

<sup>833</sup> Since June 1994 in particular, the Bo-Kenema highway came under repeated ambushes, putting pressure on Kenema Town: Inter Press Service, 10 August 1994



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driver was killed while driving his vehicle from Bo to Kenema. Stolen property and captured civilians were taken to Camp Zogoda.

Blama, the headquarter town of Small Bo Chiefdom, is located at a strategic crossroad to Kenema Town, Koribondo (Jama Bongor Chiefdom, Bo District) and Potoru (Barri Chiefdom, Pujehun District). On their way to Blama Chiefdom, RUF forces passed by Topanda Ngovokpan, Kpatema and Yawuema. Between March and April, they attacked Blama six times. At this time, SLA forces were deployed at Blama, some ULIMO members were patrolling in villages and civilians from the surrounding villages had deserted their homes to come to Blama, the headquarter town. Vigilante groups<sup>834</sup> controlling checkpoints in Small Bo Chiefdom were monitoring the movement of people entering and leaving the chiefdom and reporting persons suspected of being "rebel" collaborators or spies to the head of the vigilante unit, who in turn reported to the SLA Commanding Officer in Blama. On 5 March 1994, a man suspected of being an RUF spy was apprehended at Blama, taken to the Police Station and shot dead in public by a member of the military police. On 6 March, another man was captured in Blama and taken to the Police Station. He denied being a collaborator and declared that RUF forces had planned to attack the town. The man was not killed but left in the cell and the information was passed on to Kenema SLA Brigade Headquarter with a request for reinforcements, but none was sent.

Despite repeated efforts,<sup>835</sup> RUF forces were unable to capture Blama but established a base at Yawuema, from where they raided surrounding villages, leaving civilians caught between RUF activities and SLA activities at Blama. SLA forces were using the Blama men to carry property they had stolen to Kenema Town and were forcing women to marry them. Civilians were also punished for minor reasons, such as failing to carry out work assigned to them by an SLA member. Punishments ranged from beatings to detention in a guardroom for a day or two without food. Curfews were also declared, particularly when the SLA was going on "looting missions", with civilians forced to stay in their houses from 5.00 p.m. until 11.00 a.m. the following morning. Furthermore, life for Small Bo inhabitants was made even more difficult due to the continuous ambushes laid on the Bo-Kenema highway, rendering the highway unusable for trucks and thus depriving them of necessary daily items.

In April 1994, civilians returning to Tunkia Chiefdom assembled mainly in Jao and Gegbwema where ULIMO forces were deployed. It is believed that around 15,000 civilians regrouped at Jao and around 30,000 at Gegbwema at that time. However, ULIMO forces were committing violent acts against civilians, ranging from harassment, such as asking people to go indoors during the day without any reason, to detaining or shooting dead those who ignored their orders. ULIMO forces would also draw up lists of alleged "rebels" for execution, such as seven young men from Mani village who were executed in front of their parents, accused of being "rebels". At Jao, in May, ULIMO forces gathered 15 civilians, explaining they were to be sacrificed for them to win the war and also for the death of one of their colleagues. One civilian was killed at close range, while the remaining 14 people were saved through the intervention of the Section Chief.<sup>836</sup> In another

<sup>834</sup> These vigilante groups were equipped with clubs, spears, single barrel guns and slings.

<sup>835</sup> RUF forces reportedly attacked Blama six times between March and April.

<sup>836</sup> It seems that the reason given by the ULIMO forces was untrue, as it appeared instead to have been a way to obtain palm oil from civilians.



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incident, ULIMO forces brought inhabitants from Giewahun to Jao, executed four of them and killed three Imams. ULIMO forces based at Gegbwema displayed the same behaviour; for example, 12 young men from Damawuro, branded “rebels” or collaborators, were arrested and executed, as were seven men from Tolobu. During this period, people were living in very poor conditions and lacked food because the only vehicles that could drive on the roads were ULIMO vehicles.

Gaura Chiefdom was also the scene of the death of civilians killed by ULIMO forces. After an attack on Sandaru in 1994 and following the death of a ULIMO commander, another ULIMO commander from Joru decided to take reprisal for this death and bombed the prison, leading to the death of all the inmates. All these inmates were coming from a small village outside Joru. In another incident in May 1994, a ULIMO member was ordered to take an RUF member captured during an attack on Joru (Gaura Chiefdom) and “bath” him, meaning to execute him.

Around July, Tilorma (Tunkia Chiefdom) came under RUF attack at dawn while some people were praying at the mosque. Some people were put in one house that was set on fire. This latest development urged many civilians out of the 45,000 residing at Jao and Gegbwema to leave the chiefdom and to head for Kenema Town. On their way to Kenema at the bank of the Moa River in Dama Chiefdom, civilians heard that the RUF forces were on their back, which urged them to cross the bridge. This panicked and disorganised movement of people resulted in the death of many civilians, who drowned in the river.

These attacks on the Moawama area (Nomo, Gaura, Tunkia and Koya Chiefdoms) left the civilians in total disarray. Most of them fled into the bush for safety and the behaviour of the SLA forces, who put up little or no resistance to the RUF forces, increased their doubt as to their loyalty to the Government. It was also believed that some of the SLA forces had completely defected and joined the RUF. This disarray was further enhanced by the fact that when escaping RUF advance, civilians also had to look out for SLA forces who often shot on sight anybody coming from the direction of a place held by RUF forces, as they were suspected of being a “rebel”. Indeed, SLA forces from Dama Chiefdom were instructed to kill anybody coming from Tunkia, Nomo or Gaura Chiefdoms as civilians from those chiefdoms were considered to be “rebels” or were believed to have made their children join the RUF forces.

Throughout 1994 and 1995, those chiefdoms were under sporadic raids, mainly for looting purposes carried out by armed men whose identity could not be ascertained with certainty, for people suspected SLA forces to be responsible for some of these raids. Young men and girls continued to be abducted. During these raids, houses were looted and burnt and people killed, although most of the civilians had fled the villages. Intermittent raids carried out by RUF forces took place throughout 1995 on Sandaru, north of Gaura Chiefdom. During these raids, people were taken to carry the stolen property.

In April 1995, ambushes took place on the Kenema-Dama road, mainly to take food from Dama farmers who were bringing their produce for sale in Kenema. In one incident, a young boy who escaped the ambush explained that four of them who attempted to escape had their throat slit as deterrence to others who might plan to escape.



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The few people who stayed in the chiefdoms hid in the bushes and built huts called “sorquehun”. Armed men believed to be both RUF fighters and SLA forces who were in the chiefdoms were creating havoc, often going into the bush to find the hiding places and to loot them. People were forced to carry out tasks for the RUF forces and some were killed. The death of one Imam at Gondama (Tunkia Chiefdom) shocked people, as he was well known for being “brilliant and brave”. At Damawulo (Tunkia Chiefdom), one man who refused to join the RUF movement was killed. At Jeneh, a prominent chiefdom elder was also killed by RUF forces. Even the civilians who had earlier fled the chiefdoms were coming back regularly to get news and to find food. Those who were caught by RUF forces were often killed, alleged to be spies<sup>837</sup> for SLA forces.

At Gorahun (Tunkia Chiefdom) where SLA forces were stationed, civilians were harassed and intimidated, obliged to contribute to the feeding of the SLA. Civilians also had to pay the SLA a “landing fee” to be allowed to sell extra food items.

***Northern incursion***

Similarly to what happened in the Moawoma area, RUF fighters attacked all the chiefdoms in the north of Kenema District in early 1994.<sup>838</sup>

On 30 January 1994, RUF fighters attacked Tongo (Lower Bambara Chiefdom) from Peyama. Throughout this second phase, Peyama was an RUF stronghold whereas Tongo became the SLA base. Following this attack, the RUF forces scattered all over Lower Bambara Chiefdom and launched attacks on Malegohun and Nongowa Chiefdoms, often coming in high numbers. In January 1994, Peyama and Tongo were attacked. Before coming to Peyama, RUF forces had earlier sent a letter to the inhabitants warning them they would attack their village. When the village was attacked, the identity of the assailants was not clear for people as they were wearing military uniforms. However, no doubt remained after the RUF fighters identified themselves by writing inscriptions on the walls.

After Peyama, RUF forces moved on to Tongo, where they were repelled by SLA forces. During that battle, a lot of civilians were killed and property was stolen. The precise identity of the forces responsible was unclear, as both were wearing the same attire. From Tongo, RUF forces went to Lalehun, where they abducted hundreds of adults and children, forcing some to carry loads, and burnt down a lot of houses. In February, RUF forces attacked Ghana and killed almost everybody; later on, they moved to Talamah, where they killed a lot of civilians and burnt few houses. At Talamah, they also wrote on the walls on the houses inscriptions to identify themselves.

Largo (Nongowa Chiefdom, south of Lower Bambara Chiefdom) was attacked early one morning in February 1994 by heavily armed RUF forces. People were killed and houses looted and burnt. It is reported that one of the commanders vowed to kill any living thing he saw in the town. On the same day, Mano Junction, a strategic town and major business centre at the crossroad leading to Kailahun, Tongo and Kenema, was attacked; civilians were killed and massive looting was carried out before

<sup>837</sup> Note that at this stage, it is not possible to explain with certainty what happened in Koya Chiefdom.

<sup>838</sup> However, it cannot be ascertained whether the attacks on most of the chiefdoms located in the North of the District were carried out by the group that had attacked Lower Bambara Chiefdom or by the Southern group who had entered Nomo Chiefdom.



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some houses were burnt. Villages on the Mano Junction – Kailahun Road, mainly located in the Lower Bambara Chiefdom, were attacked during the same period, including Talia, Bo Ngeiya and Kangama. At Talia, some civilians were killed and at Bo Ngeiya, the Town Chief and other civilians captured by the forces were ordered to lie on the ground and their throats were cut, because they were accused of supporting the Kamajors and Government forces.

RUF forces coming from different directions attacked Panguma, the chiefdom headquarters town in the west of the chiefdom, at the border with Dodo Chiefdom. They captured some civilians and put them in one house, which they set fire to, killing all the people inside. Around 80 civilians were killed during that attack on 12 March 1994, including an Irish priest and a Dutch doctor, together with his wife and daughter. Houses in the town were destroyed and looted as well as the hospital, where drugs worth millions of Leones<sup>839</sup> were stolen. Again in March, Talamah was attacked and RUF forces fought the SLA. During the indiscriminate firing by both forces, many civilians were killed. At Kornia Kpindima, in late March, a large number of RUF fighters coming from Foindu and Yombuma killed some civilians, looted and burnt houses and forced many civilians to carry the loads. During a second attack on this town in April 1994, the Town Speaker and his family were captured, molested and tortured; the Town Speaker was later killed at Yombuma.

RUF forces attacked Koi town (Nongowa Chiefdom) early one morning in mid 1994, reportedly to terrorise the inhabitants, whom they accused of supporting the Kamajors. They fired indiscriminately and many civilians were killed and others were wounded. The town was looted and people were forced to carry the stolen property to Peyama.

Jormu Town (in the east of Nongowa chiefdom) was attacked three times in 1994, the first being on 28 March in the early hours of the morning by RUF forces coming from Peyama. During this attack, which resulted in looting and the abduction of many people to carry the loads, civilians suspected there was collaboration between SLA forces based there at that time and RUF forces because both factions were firing into the air, rather than at each other.

Soon after, Combema was attacked and burnt down. Some civilians were killed and a man was seriously wounded in his arm. RUF forces, who sketched a map of Sierra Leone showing areas under their control on the blackboard of the primary school, did not stay long. Before leaving, they took nearly all of the food and other valuable items in the village, forcing people to carry those items to Jormu.

Jormu was attacked for the second time few months later and RUF forces fired indiscriminately at civilians, who were running here and there, dazed and confused, killing dozens. Many houses were burnt and massive looting was carried out, with people of the town being forced to carry the stolen property. As the RUF forces left the town, they painted graffiti and writings on the walls, naming some of their commandos.

<sup>839</sup> As a very rough guide, one million leones is approximately equivalent to 500 USD. This should be placed in the context of Sierra Leone's position at the bottom of the Human Development Index: between 1991 and 2000, 57% of the population lived on less than 1 USD (2,000 SLL) per day and 74.5% lived on less than 2 USD (4,000 SLL) per day: see UNDP Human Development Report 2003, [http://www.undp.org/hdr2003/indicator/cty\\_f\\_SLE.html](http://www.undp.org/hdr2003/indicator/cty_f_SLE.html), last visited on 30 December 2003.



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SLA forces based in Tongo Field also carried out massive looting and harassed large numbers of civilians suspected of being collaborators. Civilians were also forced to work for the SLA at mining sites and many people were shot at these sites. Girls and women were raped and Chiefs and community leaders were molested and tortured, suspected of being “rebel” collaborators or sympathisers. SLA also sent messages to civilians who had earlier deserted the area to come back to the town. Checkpoints were mounted and were used to take away money and valuable items from civilians intimidated with guns and daggers. This situation remained the same under the authority of successive commanders. Besides these activities, SLA forces also undertook ambushes.<sup>840</sup>

Thus, at that time, civilians were under the pressure of both RUF and SLA forces, even if from time to time there was fighting between the two factions. Relief came in mid 1994 when a group of local hunters from Malegohun Chiefdom (east of Lower Bambara Chiefdom) established bases in Lower Bambara Chiefdom. They fought RUF forces but sustained heavy losses. At the beginning, these local hunters worked directly with the SLA forces but were later on disarmed by SLA forces.<sup>841</sup>

The third attack on Jormu (Nongowa Chiefdom) took place during the last months of 1994, apparently mainly for the purposes of obtaining food. Civilians were abducted and taken to the nearby village of Saami, where they were forced to harvest the rice fields. Shortly after this third attack, RUF forces searching for “pro-Government”, i.e. SLA, forces attacked Vaahun Town. A door-to-door search operation was carried out and people were gathered in the centre of the village. One young man suspected of being a Kamajor was shot in the Court Barrie in front of all the villagers, who were told by the commander to clap for him and laugh.

At Potehun (Nongowa Chiefdom), people were killed and many were taken away to work in the diamond fields. The continuous attacks on Jormu and its environs drove the inhabitants out of their villages. Sanguahun, Nyandeyama, Nekabu, Baoya, Damawulo, Guabu and Ngeyawamie were attacked during the last months of the year but few civilians were to be found. Most of these villages were burnt and RUF forces coming from Saami started looking for people in the bushes to increase the number of workers for the harvest.

Kenema Town was attacked on Christmas Day in 1994. A high number of heavily armed RUF forces<sup>842</sup> from Camp Zogoda launched the attack from the south-eastern part of the city, known as “Reservation side”. The battle lasted for eight days but SLA forces were unable to protect the town, although a financial contribution to help them had been asked and obtained from the inhabitants. During this attack, which lasted several days, many civilians were killed and a lot of young boys and girls were abducted. Among those killed was a prominent lawyer, whose death struck people as far away as Freetown. However, up to now, doubts still remain about the identity of those who killed him.

<sup>840</sup> This information was related in such general terms and no specific example can be given.

<sup>841</sup> These events happened in 1994 and probably 1995. See above, note 165.

<sup>842</sup> It is believed they were 400 in number.



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Throughout 1994 and 1995, villages all over Lower Bambara<sup>843</sup> came under persistent attacks. In all the attacks, people were routinely molested, tortured, killed, forced to carry stolen property and forced to join the RUF. Girls and women were raped and many houses were looted and burnt. In December 1994, RUF forces coming from Peyama killed fourteen civilians and two SLA members. People were slaughtered with knives and some of their bodies were put in pots. At Lowoma (Lower Bambara Chiefdom), also in December 1994, some houses were burnt, some civilians taken away and a few others were killed. Those who were killed were thrown into water cells, which became contaminated and caused diseases. During 1995, schools, clinics, mosques and churches throughout the chiefdom were unroofed.

In February 1995, RUF forces attacked the mining town of Kpava (Nongowa Chiefdom), asking whether any Kamajors or SLA forces were in town. Following indiscriminate shooting, around 15 civilians were killed. The town was then looted and some civilians forced to carry the load to Peyama, the main RUF base in Lower Bambara Chiefdom. People who were caught trying to escape faced severe beatings with sticks and car tyres until they died and very young girls were routinely raped.

Government forces based in Lower Bambara Chiefdom ambushed a lorry between Ngiehun and Lalehun in May 1995. During this attack, 14 civilians, mainly businessmen, were killed. Civilians from Lalehun were forced to take the bodies and bury them in a mass grave in Lalehun. The following month, some women of Kenema Town decided to go and plead with RUF forces stationed at Tabulay Junction. On their arrival, RUF forces opened fire and many of the women died on the spot. Others sustained bullet wounds or were taken to the RUF base and raped.

In November 1995, local hunters equipped with short guns, cutlasses and knives coming from Kenema Town attacked RUF positions in Lower Bambara Chiefdom,<sup>844</sup> repelling RUF forces who, while retreating, burnt down some villages. Civilians who had earlier fled to the bush started to come back to their villages. These local hunters at this time were not undertaking initiation as such and reporting to a man called a prominent Doctor.<sup>845</sup>

Throughout 1995 and 1996, RUF forces were coming sporadically to Nongowa Chiefdom. Fewer incidents are reported, possibly due to the fact that many people were living in the bushes and that many villages were already destroyed. During this period, RUF forces used to bypass Jormu where Kamajors and SLA forces were based, launching raids on villages out of their reach like Kpalu and Konabu.

On Election Day in February 1996, RUF forces singing "RUF says no election" attacked Kenema Town early in the morning. Among the people killed on that day was a final year student at Fourah Bay College. On the same day, the RUF launched systematic attacks on towns and villages in Dama Chiefdom, as they did not want the election to take place. An unspecified number of people were

<sup>843</sup> These villages include Torpombu, Foindu, Kamboma, Komende, Bumpe, Kornia, Sahaha and Jagor.

<sup>844</sup> These positions were located at Kornia Kpindima, Foindu, Kamboma, Largo and Kombuy.

<sup>845</sup> Initiation of Kamajors did not take place in Kenema District before 1996. However, these local hunters, as in other places in the country, were organising themselves to protect their chiefdoms, mainly equipped with bladed weapons and local guns. The registration process will require further clarification.



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killed on that day. In some instances, the RUF forces attacking villages on that day were dressed in military fatigues. Nevertheless, despite these incidents, the elections went on as planned.<sup>846</sup>

After the 1996 elections, more SLA forces came to Foindu, Kamboma, Largo and Bendu Junction (Lower Bambara Chiefdom). At checkpoints, civilians without a written document called a "pass" were not allowed to continue their journey. They were often molested and detained for long periods of time. In another incident, in June 1996, the SLA forced a lot of civilians to brush the area near Peyama. As Peyama was a RUF base, many civilians fell into an RUF ambush and were killed.

***The North-west of the District***

Coming from Lower Bambara Chiefdom through Dodo Chiefdom, RUF forces reached Simbaru Chiefdom in February 1994; Wandor and Kandu Leppeama Chiefdoms were affected shortly after. These chiefdoms will be examined together as it appears that the same RUF commander was in charge of the RUF forces operational in these chiefdoms. As for Gorama Mende Chiefdom, the northernmost chiefdom of the District, it is likely that RUF forces who reached it came from two different directions and the actions of one group may be linked with what happened in Kandu Leppeama, Simbaru and Wandor Chiefdoms (south of Gorama Mende Chiefdom) while the other actions that affected mainly Punduru (north-east of the chiefdom), were directed from Kono District.

In February 1994, an RUF group called "Tay Go" entered Simbaru Chiefdom and rapidly established a camp under the Lomie Hill they called Joe Bush.<sup>847</sup> Before establishing their camp, RUF forces attacked Goma. They entered the town with sporadic firing while people were fleeing. The RUF forces stayed for three days in the town and abducted some civilians. The civilians who came out of the bush after the attack counted 15 bodies. The houses were unroofed and young men were forced to carry the stolen property, including food, poultry and personal items such as radios, recorders and clothes to a site that became an RUF camp. Before leaving, they set the town on fire, burning down all the approximately 123 houses of the town.

Shortly afterwards, the first group was reinforced by a second group called "Death Squad", which also came from Lower Bambara Chiefdom. On their way to Simbaru Chiefdom, this second group passed by Dodo Chiefdom, east of Simbaru Chiefdom. At Guala (Dodo Chiefdom), they shot and killed nine civilians and burnt 18 people alive. After spending two days in the town, they continued towards Simbaru Chiefdom and reached the Hydro Electricity Power Dam, located in Simbaru Chiefdom at the border with Dodo Chiefdom. They vandalised the dam and killed civilians who stayed with the Security Police who were stationed there. Civilians who went to the dam afterwards counted 16 bodies, including women and children. Eight civilians were also mutilated and four young boys, allegedly below the age of 15, had melted plastic dripped into their eyes while they were being interrogated by the RUF forces.

<sup>846</sup> It is interesting to note that very few reports mention RUF disturbances on Election Day. Furthermore, besides Kenema Town (Nongowa Chiefdom), the other area affected was Dama Chiefdom, to be found south of Nongowa Chiefdom, Kenema Town being located nearby the border with Dama Chiefdom.

<sup>847</sup> Joe Bush was a generic name given to training bases, like "Camp Lion" in other places. Other camps called Camp Joe Bush were to be found at other places in Kenema District.



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The RUF used Camp Joe Bush as a training camp and as a permanent base to attack the whole of Simbaru Chiefdom and the surrounding chiefdoms. Civilians who had been captured were taken to the camp, where they were subjected to physical and mental violence. One example of this was called "Gunproof society". During the course of this action, captives were first forced to dig deep pits and to collect over 150 different kinds of leaves from the bush, where they had been escorted for this purpose. Captives were then obliged to lie down in the pit, where they were covered with the sticks and boiled leaves they had collected, which were then set alight for the captives to be smoked. After this, civilians were forced to wash themselves with the water in which the leaves had been boiled. They were then covered with burnt oil on their whole body and forced to sit for hours under the sun. Following this, RUF members shot them to prove they were "gunproof", as a result of which many people died. In addition, people who had been captured and brought to the camp were shot dead and their flesh cooked by women captives.

From this camp, RUF forces started attacking villages, systematically molesting, torturing, killing, raping and abducting people and looting and burning houses. The scale of these acts was very high. The following incidents describe the actions carried out during this period.

The first village to be attacked from the camp was Lomabu (Simbaru Chiefdom), where RUF forces killed 13 people, set the village on fire and captured some men and women. They then divided into groups to visit the whole chiefdom, coming back after the attacks to their camp with stolen property and captured civilians. Patrol groups undertaking these actions in various villages were given descriptive names such as "Operation No Mercy" and "Operation Fire".

At Borboru, a section headquarter in Simbaru Chiefdom, people fled as the RUF entered the town, firing their weapons. Those people who were caught were either captured or killed; this attack resulted in the death of 27 civilians, including children. The village was massively looted and civilians were forced to carry the stolen property, which included animals, clothes and zinc, back to the camp. The RUF forces remained in Gbangeima for nine weeks, during which time they mutilated civilians, raped women and girls, burnt people alive, skinned people alive and ate the flesh of their victims. Top commanders were given the most beautiful girls and the other women who had been caught were distributed among the junior commandos. Two young girls were buried alive as a sacrifice at the river bank. People were forced to work and cook for them. At the entrance and exit points of the town, they mounted checkpoints at which they displayed human heads. At one point, they started burning furniture instead of gathering wood and moved all the captives to the camp. Before leaving, they set the village on fire, destroying almost all the houses. People who managed to escape from the camp later found the village destroyed and over 40 bodies lying on the ground.

Deima Town (Kandu Leppeama Chiefdom, south of Simbaru Chiefdom) was attacked many times during this period, as it was a diamond rich area. In March 1994, the RUF group called "Tay Go", wearing combat attire and red berets, attacked Deima, killing 20 civilians on the spot and abducting many young girls. The heavily armed RUF forces attacked and raided many villages in the chiefdom. The RUF group then settled for a while at Bouajabu, from where they attacked other villages. At Bouajabu, 15 people were captured and forced to carry stolen property. At Jenneh, many civilians drowned in a deep stream as they tried to escape an oncoming RUF attack, of which they had been warned by an inhabitant of the village. RUF forces stayed in Jenneh for three days, killing civilians



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and raping girls. When they entered the town, the RUF forces met a student from Milton Margai College with his aunt. Accusing him of being a SLA member, RUF forces dragged him away, beat him, wrapped him in rice bags and a bed mat and set fire to the mat. His aunt was then taken away and sexually assaulted by more than one member of the RUF. She was taken with them, forced to cook for them and they said that she was now their “Mammy Queen”, forcing her to have sex with them. This woman managed to escape later during a fight between the RUF group and SLA forces that took place at Gbando.

Other villages in Kandu Leppeama Chiefdom - such as Motorma, Banda and Leppeama - also came under attack in March 1994. Civilians were killed and houses were burnt down. At the headquarter town of Gbando, one young man from Levuma who had been sent by the acting Paramount Chief to report on what was happening in the surrounding villages saw members of a fighting force wearing combat uniforms and identifying themselves as RUF forces. Many houses in the town were on fire and bodies were lying in the backyards of some houses, while other inhabitants who were in houses that were on fire were crying.

RUF forces raided other villages in Simbaru Chiefdom before reaching the chiefdom headquarter of Boajibu. During those raids, they vandalised and took everything they came across, including cattle and poultry, and took away civilians to carry what they had just taken. At Tawalun, they looted extensively, including domestic animals, burnt down the village, captured 19 strong young men to carry the load, killed two civilians with machetes and threw three people into a burning house. At Kpetema, where they arrived in the evening hours, they entered the village with heavy fire and captured eight men to carry their load. At Peyela, a village of 98 family houses, they vandalised the houses and took all the property they found, including household items, cash, money, clothes and cattle. They captured civilians to bring all the items to Camp Joe Bush, set the whole village on fire and mutilated seven civilians, namely three women, a three year old girl and three young men. One woman who was six months pregnant had her belly cut open to settle an argument the RUF forces were having about the sex of the baby she carried.

On 17 March 1994, the same group launched an attack on Simbaru Chiefdom headquarters, Boajibu, known to be a business centre for the neighbouring chiefdoms and containing the offices of many dealers in diamonds and gold. Before entering the town, they laid ambushes on all the entrances. Seven hundred and sixty-nine civilians were captured and divided into four groups, each of which was to be given a section of the town to burn down. Each day civilians were killed; they were burnt alive, dropped in boiling water, shot or had melted plastic dripped into their eyes. The bodies of their victims were cooked and eaten; this human flesh was called Yanimi. Many people were mutilated and dozens of women and girls were often raped by numerous RUF members. Relief came from SLA forces from Komboya Chiefdom (Bo District) who attacked the town after 17 days of RUF occupation, repelling the RUF forces. SLA forces then returned to their base in Bo District.

RUF forces began a looting spree on 29 March 1994 at Konta (Gorama Mende Chiefdom), a town known for its business transactions.<sup>848</sup> RUF forces entered the town at dusk with heavy firing and, as

<sup>848</sup> The direction the RUF forces came from cannot be ascertained with certainty. As Konta is located at a nodal point on a road coming from the south (Wandor Chiefdom), it is likely that those forces came from Wandor Chiefdom. However, information collected for Wandor Chiefdom does not mention any troops movement late



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civilians had already fled, undertook systematic looting and burning of the houses. Two people were killed: one man, described as insane, who did not leave the town was stabbed to death because RUF forces were suspicious that he did not leave and an old man was burnt alive in a house the RUF forces had set on fire. Those RUF forces then continued their looting spree in the surrounding villages and captured civilians were forced to carry the stolen property on their heads. At Palima, five civilians were killed and 20 houses left in ashes. The RUF forces went back to Konta, where they killed and ate domestic animals.

Three days later, the RUF forces left for Modema, which is on the road that leads to Tonkolili District, in the north of Gorama Mende Chiefdom. On their way to Modema, RUF forces burnt many houses: five houses at Gbandi, six at Kortuhun, three huts at Fulawahun and 20 at Kenyema. At the Kenyema Bridge, one civilian who was wearing a t-shirt with a NPRC logo was stabbed to death. Another civilian was captured at the bridge and joined the captives. Modema, a periodical market centre located in an area producing coffee and cocoa, was attacked on 1 April 1994. During this attack, all the public buildings were burnt down and one civilian caught trying to flee was killed. Houses were also burnt down in the surrounding villages. The RUF forces left Modema for the road leading to Masingbi (Konike Sanda Chiefdom, Tonkolili District). SLA forces came to Modema late April, unsuccessfully pursued the RUF forces, stayed in the town for some days and looted what was left before leaving.

In April 1994, RUF forces entered the north-east of Gorama Mende Chiefdom. At this time, vigilante groups<sup>849</sup> composed of local hunters and volunteered civilians trained in basic military tactics were active in the chiefdom. Those vigilante groups were to serve as local observers assisting the SLA forces and were sometimes used for reconnaissance (RECE). One of those vigilante groups had its first encounter in April 1994 when, hearing that RUF forces coming from Nimiyama Chiefdom (Kono District) were near Punduru, they ambushed those RUF forces in Kemuya forest, killing one of them and injuring others. Following this incident, RUF forces entered Kemuya and killed five civilians, including women and children, and burnt 10 houses. On their way back to their base in Nimiyama Chiefdom, those RUF forces went through Ngorgbedehun, on the east bank of the Sewa River, where they raided the houses and burnt down two of them.

On 8 May 1994, SLA forces came back to Modema (Gorama Mende Chiefdom), claiming they had been deployed to protect civilians. They taxed the people of the town and on 9 June they left, allegedly for another military assignment. Three days after they had left, Modema was attacked but the inhabitants could not tell whether the assailants were RUF or SLA forces. During this attack, five people were killed and the armed men located the civilians in their hiding places, beat them and took their property.

The situation prevailing in Simbaru Chiefdom also affected Wandor Chiefdom, north of Simbaru Chiefdom. Beginning in June 1994, small groups of RUF forces were coming from Simbaru

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March 1994, only in May 1994. It could nonetheless be deduced that the troops who passed by (and only bypassed) Wandor Chiefdom in May 1994 are the same as the one who attacked Konta (Gorama Mende Chiefdom) and that one of these two dates is not completely exact.

<sup>849</sup> These vigilante groups were equipped with traditional weapons like swords, lances, knives and short guns (local hunters).



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Chieftdom, initially at least led by the same commander who had been leading the "Tay Go" group. Before these regular visits of small groups, hundreds of RUF forces passed by the chieftdom in May 1994, en route to open a new base further north, killing two people as they passed through Gendema. In June 1994, RUF forces coming from Boajibu (Simbaru Chieftdom) arrested the Town Chief and killed him in a nearby village, on the basis that the inhabitants did not feed them well. His wife was raped and the RUF forces took two young girls away with them as they moved from village to village to take food. In December, on a food-finding mission, they went to Kpangbaru, where they mutilated a man they identified as being a vigilante. While he was still alive, his stomach was slit open and his organs removed and eaten.

At one point (reports vary between June 1994 and the end of 1995), SLA forces were based at Boajibu (Simbaru Chieftdom). When they arrived, they asked people to come out of the bushes and those who did not were later forced to come out. Civilians were forced to stay indoors from 5.00 pm until 9.30 am. Every morning, civilians were dispatched to bring food for the SLA forces in the chieftdom, which later extended to neighbouring chieftdoms when food supplies in Simbaru Chieftdom were exhausted. SLA forces were patrolling in Simbaru Chieftdom and the neighbouring chieftdoms, bringing with them civilians used to carry properties they would loot. Civilians were forced to work for SLA forces, mainly to mine diamonds for them; villages were raided to bring manpower for this purpose. Civilians were also forced to do farm work. Orders were given to shoot any civilian caught trying to steal gems. In one incident, civilians fleeing RUF attacks in Kono District and coming to Boajibu were arrested and detained for two days. Three of them were then shot to death and civilians were told to tie their feet together and to "throw them away". Civilians were beaten if they failed to give food to the SLA forces. Orders were passed that civilians had to divide their food in two parts, one part for them and one for their commander. Civilians were harassed for their property and SLA forces were searching for civilians in their "sorquehun". During one of these searches, some SLA members fell into a RUF ambush. In reprisal, SLA forces killed two young civilians accused of being responsible for the death of their colleagues. They cut their throats, slit their stomachs, cut out their organs and cooked them. During all this period, many women and girls were raped and anyone who denied a request from an SLA member was severely beaten. Similar actions continued under successive commanders.

Punduru (in the north-east of Gorama Mende Chieftdom) was attacked in October 1994 by RUF forces on a looting spree. Over 250 men entered the town wearing red headbands, about 50 of them unarmed, one of whom was a Lebanese businessman captured in Nimiyama Chieftdom (Kono District). The heavy firing frightened civilians and vigilantes, who all fled the town. The RUF forces then started hunting for people and property, raiding the whole town. They killed 10 civilians, mainly people who could not escape, including the elderly and young children. Other civilians they found were not killed but used as manpower to carry the stolen property. However, one man who was told to carry property taken from the pharmacy and who refused was beaten to death with a bladed weapon. Before leaving the town for their base with their captives, the RUF forces set fire to the mosque, the health centre, the primary school and two churches.<sup>850</sup> However, some of the local hunters managed to encounter the RUF forces at the border with Nimiyama Chieftdom (Kono District). RUF forces, heavily laden with stolen property, were not able to put up strong resistance and fled, leaving most of the stolen property behind and enabling most of the captives to flee.

<sup>850</sup> Punduru would not come under other RUF attack until 1997.



Another group of RUF forces<sup>851</sup> reached Kandu Leppeama Chiefdom in August 1995<sup>852</sup> and inflicted a lot of violence on both person and property as the following examples highlight. At Levuma, RUF forces killed civilians, sexually assaulted women, burnt some houses and captured civilians to carry their load. At Jenneh, they killed five civilians and tortured others. The RUF forces also killed 16 civilians, burnt 45 houses, amputated the limbs of seven civilians, raped four girls and took other women from their husbands at Gbando, the chiefdom headquarter. Deima, a diamond rich town, was attacked not only during this wave of attacks but also many more times throughout the following months as RUF forces, although not based there, sporadically entered the chiefdom on raids.<sup>853</sup> Following these attacks, local authorities addressed the Government, expressing their deep need to have some SLA forces stationed in their chiefdom. However, the SLA forces who were sent as a result of this request also began harassing civilians and taking their property.

Due to SLA attacks in 1995, RUF forces mounted serious assaults in Wandor Chiefdom. At Gendema, civilians were assembled and nine of them were locked up in a room after three had been killed. The nine men in the room were taken out one after the other and beaten to death. The RUF forces did not use bullets, both to save ammunition and to avoid alerting SLA forces based at Boajibu (Simbaru Chiefdom). RUF forces later proceeded to one of their main bases, called "Bokurr", in Valunia chiefdom (Bo District).

Tongi, the headquarter town of Gorama Mende Chiefdom, was overrun by RUF forces in March 1995. Over 500 well-armed RUF forces entered the town, coming from the north of the chiefdom,<sup>854</sup> gathered people in the Court Barrie and declared that the town was now an "RUF entity". New authorities were appointed, including a Town Commander, a Town Mother and a clerk. The Town Commander was charged with taxing the inhabitants and gathering food for the RUF. Youths were ordered to unroof houses and to use the zinc to build a camp called Joe Bush<sup>855</sup> in the forest near the town. During the time of the building of the camp, two civilians were beaten to death, as they did not obey the RUF order to unroof and transport some zinc.<sup>856</sup> Young men and children were captured and trained in the camp on guerrilla warfare throughout 1995 and 1996.<sup>857</sup>

Local hunters in Simbaru Chiefdom decided to organise themselves and provide assistance to SLA forces, mainly by showing them routes within the chiefdom. At this time, proper initiation was not taking place; rather it was an informal gathering of men above 20 years who then presented themselves to the SLA. This movement also took place in Wandor Chiefdom, where a meeting with local hunters from neighbouring chiefdoms was organised.

<sup>851</sup> It was not the 'Tay Go' group.

<sup>852</sup> This event could have taken place in 1994.

<sup>853</sup> These continuous attacks on Deima resulted to the death of a lot of civilians, the number of casualties per attack being however not ascertained.

<sup>854</sup> The report mentions that they came from the direction of Mondema, north of Tongi (Gorama Mende Chiefdom) and accordingly those RUF forces came either from Tonkolili or from Kono Districts.

<sup>855</sup> Joe Bush was a generic name given to training bases, like "Camp Lion" in other places. Other camps called Camp Joe Bush were to be found at other places in Kenema District.

<sup>856</sup> These two civilians could not carry out the task RUF ordered them to do, as they were ill.

<sup>857</sup> The camp would later on be attacked by Kamajors.



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In October 1995, at Gombu (Wandor Chiefdom), RUF forces killed 17 civilians and razed the village to the ground by setting houses on fire. Women and girls were sexually abused and civilians were taken away, forced to show the RUF forces routes by which they might avoid local hunters. At Falla the next day, one civilian who cheered, thinking those forces coming to the village were SLA forces, was killed and dismembered with a bladed weapon, his body parts scattered all over the town. Another man who was requested to cook for them and took the meat for himself was also killed and his stomach cut open. On that same night, Falla was set on fire.

The SLA presence in Simbaru Chiefdom did not prevent RUF forces attacking villages. On 25 December 1995, as RUF forces attacked Boajibu for the second time, SLA forces fled the town. During this attack, the newly initiated Bondo society girls were captured, the few houses left standing after the first burning were burnt and nine men were killed. The entire town was destroyed, including all the buildings except two mosques and a school. The RUF forces did not stay in the town and around one week later, civilians and SLA forces came back to the town. SLA forces went back to patrolling Simbaru Chiefdom and the neighbouring chiefdoms, where they took away what was left after RUF attacks, unroofing houses and removing their doors and windows shutters. They forced civilians to go with them to carry those items back to Boajibu.

In January 1996, RUF forces came back in Wandor Chiefdom and this time engaged people to join them, organising meetings and appointing Towns Commanders. Those who refused to join were considered as enemies. According to one of the RUF commanders, they would not kill anybody if people followed orders. However, shortly after, their behaviour changed and elders were punished; one was strung up inside the Court Barrie and seriously flogged. Those civilians who had to cooperate with RUF forces were later denounced to SLA forces in Simbaru Chiefdom and, everyday, some were punished with lashes while others were fined.

In 1996, both local hunters and SLA forces attacked Camp Joe Bush in Simbaru Chiefdom and destroyed it. The bodies of many civilians were found almost fully decomposed in the deserted camp, most of them victims of the "Gunproof society" practice. From the documents found in the camp, it became clear that this camp was going to be developed as the main RUF base for the eight neighbouring chiefdoms. The interrogation of the captives revealed that RUF forces were coming from different chiefdoms all over the District. They revealed the way they were treated in the camp: they were forced to work all day long without proper food, continuously beaten or molested; women were constantly raped, often raped by multiple attackers and many of them died from those rapes; bodies were not buried but were thrown in the bushes or in streams; any time RUF forces left the camp to attack a village, they forced captives to go with them, forcing them to the frontline, to carry the property they would take; any civilian who was tired and could no longer sustain the weight of the load was either beaten to death or shot; and young boys and girls under 15 were trained to become combatants. Babies who were born in the camp were well treated, as they were viewed as future combatants. When they entered the camp, Kamajors took automatic rifles and machine guns, hiding these weapons from the SLA forces. Following the capture of the camp, RUF forces attacked Boajibu many times, trying to get back the documents they had lost.



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Following this successive attack, the Kamajors of Simbaru Chiefdom established five bases in the chiefdom at Fonima, Gbonjeima, Goma, Boajibu and Njagbwema. They routinely led SLA forces on patrol. To buy the cartridges for their single barrel guns, they used to tax male civilians while women were requested to contribute with rice. As Kamajor control in the chiefdom grew stronger, civilians started coming back in the chiefdom.

The collaboration between the SLA and local hunters did not last long, as SLA forces started molesting and, at times, disarming those local hunters. At Boajibu, the new SLA commander who arrived in April stated that “two captains cannot drive one ship at the same time”, meaning that SLA forces did not need another armed group to defend the country. SLA behaviour towards civilians became worse when the new commander arrived. Incidents of rapes, sexual harassment and forceful marriages became common practice at this time. SLA forces forced civilians to work in mines and to dig up diamonds for them. SLA forces guarding the mining areas were told by their commander to injure or kill any civilian caught trying to steal a gem. That mining activity went on throughout 1996 until early 1997, when SLA forces left the area and the Kamajors arrived. Civilians were also forced to engage in large-scale farming under the surveillance of SLA forces. Civilians worked all day and went back home in the evening without being fed. On one occasion while they were searching for civilians in the bush to take away their property, SLA forces fell into an RUF ambush and one of them was killed. The SLA commander in Boajibu accused two local hunters from Wandor Chiefdom of being responsible for the killing of this SLA member. The two local hunters had to lie down on the street and were killed, having their throats cut with a dagger. The junior SLA members then removed the organs, cut the fleshy parts of the bodies, cooked and ate them.

In December 1996, the SLA commander ordered the Bondo society heads to initiate girls into the society. At first, the heads refused, as they stated that on hearing that the initiation was going to take place, RUF forces would attack them, especially since RUF forces were constantly attacking the chiefdom headquarter of Boajibu. Nevertheless, the SLA commander forced them to perform the initiation on 23 December. In the morning of 25 December, RUF forces attacked Boajibu; the SLA forces fled and left the inhabitants, including the new Bondo initiates, in the hands of RUF forces. The RUF forces caught the new initiates with their superiors, called Soweis, and sexually assaulted the girls who had been initiated only two days previously. Furthermore, they killed nine civilians, including young married women and children. A lot of buildings were also burnt down.

***The Kamajors - 1996***

In 1996, on hearing that Kamajor societies were being established in Bo and Bonthe Districts, elders and Chiefs in the various chiefdoms of Kenema District started nominating their own men for initiation as Kamajors, which took place in Kenema Town. The first batches of those initiates returned to their chiefdoms in the middle of 1996 and deployed at key entry points to the towns and villages. Most of the men nominated by the elders to join the society were in displaced camps, as was almost all the population of the chiefdoms.

Events in Dama Chiefdom highlight that in 1996, the welfare of the local hunters, now regrouped under the CDF, was transferred to the Government and each chiefdom authority was required to appoint a chief Kamajor to act as chiefdom coordinator for the CDF in the chiefdom. Battalion



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commanders and commanding officers were also appointed.<sup>858</sup> The conditions for initiation, as applied at least during the early stage of the Kamajors, were as follows:<sup>859</sup>

- Men must be above 18 years.
- Men must join the Kamajor society voluntary and append their signature.
- Those men must be recommended to the Paramount Chief by a Town Chief or Section Chief.
- Those men must willingly contribute condiments to the Kamajors.

In some chiefdoms, such as Gorama Mende Chiefdom, men who wished to be initiated as CDF members had to pay a fee ranging from Le 15,000 to Le 25,000. Once the money was paid, a date was set and the men who were going to be initiated were to come dressed in a “war ronko”, which is a type of country cloth.

RUF forces were in control of Langrama, Niawa and Small Bo Chiefdoms until 1996 when the first Kamajors coming back from their initiation and started fighting. In June 1996, local authorities from the three chiefdoms decided to form their own society. A Section Chief from Niawa Chiefdom encouraged people living in the displaced camps to be initiated. The first arrangements combined Small Bo, Niawa, Langurama (Kenema District), Wunde (Bo District), Wunde and Barri (Pujehun District) Chiefdoms; this group was known as the Wanjei Defence Committee. However, this initial arrangement did not last as the group as there were complications due to the fact that it was composed of chiefdoms from different Districts. It was therefore decided that the initiation for the Kamajors society should be undertaken at District level. Thus, Small Bo, Niawa and Langrama Chiefdoms regrouped and became known as the Upper Wanjei Defence Committee.

After the initiation in Bo, the first group of around 200 Kamajors arrived in Small Bo Chiefdom in October 1996. With weapons provided by SLA forces and together with the SLA forces, the newly initiated Kamajors launched their first attack on RUF positions in a town located four miles west of Blama.<sup>860</sup> It is reported that SLA forces gave weapons to the Kamajors despite the animosity and distrust between them. During this first attack, the Kamajors did not dislodge the RUF forces but obtained their first automatic rifles (AK47s). Together with the Kamajors from Wunde Chiefdom (Bo District), they successfully attacked an RUF camp at Semabu (Small Bo Chiefdom). Kamajors continued their progression into Small Bo Chiefdom, taking weapons abandoned by the retreating RUF forces.

The Kamajors of the three chiefdoms (Small Bo, Niawa, Langruma Chiefdoms), assisted by Kamajors from Bo District (Wunde and Boama Chiefdoms, sharing the border with Kenema District) and together with SLA and ECOMOG forces, then launched attacks on Niawa Chiefdom. Using two different roads, one coming from Koribondo (Jiama Bongor Chiefdom, Bo District) and the other from Potoru (Barri Chiefdom, Pujehun District), the combined forces advanced on RUF camps at Kpantena Ngovokpan, Topanda and Bandawor before reaching the main camp in

<sup>858</sup> For more details on the structure of the CDF, see the chapter on the CDF in the Fighting Forces section of this report.

<sup>859</sup> These conditions were specifically reported in relation to Simbaru Chiefdom, generally applied across the whole District and, indeed, the whole Kamajor movement.

<sup>860</sup> The name of the place is not specified, only its location.



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Bandawor forest, called Camp Zogoda. The fighting lasted several days, as a result of which the combined forces were able to dislodge the RUF from the camp. In the camp, the Kamajors found many RUF documents consisting of records of RUF activities, including, *inter alia*, records of the attacks on the Bo–Kenema Highway, how many items were stolen and how many people were captured to carry the load. In the camp, the combined forces found many captured civilians, who related how they were treated during their stay in the camp. For example, abductees who were caught trying to escape were shot dead or had the letters “RUF” inscribed on their body with hot iron. Civilians were forced to work in the camp and were given little or no food. Villages considered by the RUF as “enemy” bases were burnt down and captured civilians were used to carry boxes of ammunition on their heads for long distances. Young boys between eight and eleven were trained in the camp and sent to fight with weapons almost too big for them to carry. Some of those civilians found in the camp were brought to Blama to a camp that hosted them and the captured RUF forces were taken to the SLA Brigade Headquarter in Kenema.<sup>861</sup>

After the Kamajors had successfully repelled RUF forces from the three chiefdoms, civilians started to come back from displaced camps and the bush to their villages. The Kamajors who had initially all been based in Small Bo Chiefdom also returned to their various chiefdoms, namely Niawa, Langruma and Small Bo Chiefdoms. From that time, Niawa and Langruma chiefdoms did not encounter any more RUF attacks.

Newly initiated Kamajors were deployed at different locations – Deima, Levuma and Gbanda – in Kandu Leppeama Chiefdom. While initially they collaborated with the SLA forces, this deteriorated as they openly disagreed with the behaviour of SLA forces towards civilians. Nevertheless, Kamajors’ behaviour towards civilians was not exempt from violence either, as civilians accused of being “rebel” collaborators were chased. In one incident, two civilians who had been appointed Town Commanders at Kamboma and Koindu Villages by RUF forces and who had actively collaborated with RUF forces were killed, although it appears that these people were killed by the people of those villages, rather than the Kamajors.

In Wandor Chiefdom, strong men who were nominated by the Chiefs to be initiated in Jijama Bongor Chiefdom (Bo District) returned to the chiefdom in September 1996 and successfully repelled RUF forces. Kamajors started patrolling at the borders of the chiefdom and in order to avoid having civilians caught in crossfire during encounters with RUF/AFRC forces, Kamajors requested the civilians from surrounding villages to gather at Falla in the centre of the chiefdom. Shortly after they arrived in the chiefdom, Kamajors fought with RUF/AFRC forces who were en route to attack them at Falla<sup>862</sup> and succeeded in repelling them. After a second attack that took place two days later, Wandor Chiefdom did not sustain any more RUF or RUF/AFRC incursions.

In September 1996, Kamajors coming from Kenema Town repelled RUF forces from different villages in Lower Bambara Chiefdom, including Lowoma, Fowaru and Ngelaima. People who had fled to the bush started to come back to the villages. However, they were soon forced to give food to the Kamajors and those who refused were detained for hours and molested. Kamajors also deposed Chiefs and decided on private matters, punishing and fining people they found guilty. The

<sup>861</sup> The fate of these prisoners is not known.

<sup>862</sup> The fighting took place near Kamboma.



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heads of some RUF members were cut off and displayed in Tongo Field. Kamajors entered Peyama, drove the RUF out and took all the stolen property back to Tongo, where they worked with SLA forces.

In November 1996, Kamajors from Nomo, Gaura and Tunkia Chiefdoms joined forces to dislodge the RUF, launching successful attacks in Nomo Chiefdom. They were first equipped with short guns, sticks, machetes and cutlasses and progressively, were provided with more sophisticated weapons, such as AK47s, taken from opponents during the attacks. Any person suspected of being a "rebel" would be killed, their heads sometimes chopped off. In January 1997, at Dambala (Nomo Chiefdom), three men were shot dead, alleged to be "rebels".

Early that same month, Kamajors came back from their initiation in Gorama Mende Chiefdom and launched their first attack on the headquarter town of Tongi. They successfully repelled the RUF forces from the town and from Camp Joe Bush. After they overran Tongi, Kamajors arrested all civilians who had held positions during the RUF's stay, threatening to kill them. However, due to the intervention of the chiefdom authorities, those people were not killed but instead were forced to pay the following fines: one bag of rice, five gallons of palm oil, two cotton cloths and Le 50,000. Kamajors also repelled RUF forces from other towns in the chiefdom such as Vengema, Modema, Keema, Jouma, Berembah, Benduma and Nyandehun. More Kamajors were sent for initiation to strengthen their forces. Another Camp Joe Bush at Kpetema Teiyeh, in the north of the chiefdom at the border with Tonkolili District, was attacked and Kamajors drove RUF forces out of the camp. Some RUF forces were killed while most of them ran away. Kamajors from Gorama Mende Chiefdom were also active outside the boundaries of their chiefdom as they fought RUF forces in Tonkolili District.<sup>863</sup>

On 3 March 1997, an initiator from Bonthe District was called upon to initiate more Kamajors in Gorama Mende Chiefdom. In the same week, on hearing this information, RUF forces sent a reconnaissance (RECE) to plan an attack on the chiefdom. Kamajors did not wait for the RUF forces to come and on 10 March, attacked their base at Sullay Ground. The captured RUF forces were sent to Bo Town,<sup>864</sup> under the protection of the chiefdom coordinator of the Kamajors. After this last fight, Gorama Mende Chiefdom was virtually free of RUF presence, the only subsequent sightings being a few RUF forces seen on food finding missions, with no reported fatalities.

In March 1997, following an encounter between SLA forces and the CDF at Tongo (Lower Bamabara Chiefdom), the Kamajors left the town and many civilians were tortured and killed by SLA forces on the grounds that they were Kamajor supporters. Kamajors who were driven out to nearby chiefdoms regrouped and retook Tongo, driving out SLA forces and establishing a permanent base. Retreating SLA forces killed a lot of civilians on their way to Kono District in Konjo and Venema (both villages are located in Lower Bambara Chiefdom). At Tongo, the Kamajors targeted alleged SLA sympathisers; they tortured and killed many civilians on these grounds. From this base, Kamajors were soon controlling the chiefdom.

<sup>863</sup> See the factual analysis for Tonkolili District.

<sup>864</sup> At this time, Bo Town was under SLA control.



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When initiations started to take place in Kenema, local hunters from Simbaru Chiefdom went to be initiated. On their return in March 1997, they were told that the SLA forces had left for Kenema Town. From this time on, the Kamajors were in charge of the chiefdom. In Kandu Leppeama Chiefdom, Chiefs recommended strong men to be initiated and when they came back from their initiation, they were divided into different groups to protect the chiefdom.

In March 1997, RUF forces attacked the following villages in Simbaru Chiefdom, setting houses on fire and killing civilians: Nyahu (over 60 dwellings were burnt and six people killed); Mamboma (over 60 houses burnt, four old men killed and two men mutilated); Paniniga (45 houses were burnt and nine people killed); Gawama (over 170 houses, two primary schools and a health centre were set on fire and 17 people were killed); Gereihun (over 250 houses and public buildings were set on fire, 48 people were killed and four people mutilated); Fawana, Garahun, Jagbwema, Gogbebu and Nyeyama.<sup>865</sup>

In May 1997, a week before the Coup, the Kamajors' Chief Initiator conducted over 300 initiations at Falla (Wandor Chiefdom) to strengthen the number of Kamajors. Others travelled to Bo District to be initiated by the Deputy Chief Initiator.

Around the same time, SLA forces attacked the Kamajor base at Kenema, chasing away the Chief Initiator. During this attack, many civilians and Kamajors and few SLA members were killed and several houses, including that of the Chief Initiator, were burnt down as well as numerous homes of Kamajors and Kamajors supporters. On seeking refuge in Konia (Dama Chiefdom), the Chief Initiator was advised by the Paramount Chief to leave, due to its proximity to Kenema Town, so he left for Bo District.

Also before the Coup in May 1997, Kamajors from Nongowa Chiefdom, on hearing that SLA forces in the Dama axis were demanding money from people at the checkpoints they were operating, went there to inquire about the matter. When they arrived, SLA forces open fire on the Kamajors, who were mainly equipped with bladed weapons and some single barrel guns. The Kamajors captured the SLA commander and hacked him to death; other SLA members were given the same treatment.

### c) Third Phase: May 1997 – 2002

Following the Coup on 25 May 1997, AFRC forces asked the CDF to surrender their weapons to the nearest police station and to suspend all their activities. CDF members did not follow this request; on the contrary, although they withdrew from the battlefronts, they regrouped themselves in villages and increased their number by undertaking more initiations. During this period, young boys under 15 began joining the society. RUF/AFRC started launching attacks on Kamajor positions and vice versa.

Shortly after the coup, on 30 May 1997, it is reported in general terms that fleeing civilians were mutilated and killed by RUF/AFRC fighters at Baoma (Kandu Leppeama Chiefdom). Indeed, across the District, RUF/AFRC forces harassed and intimidated civilians, molesting them, raiding villages and taking food and other property.

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<sup>865</sup> These incidents may have taken place after the Coup of 25 May 1997.



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In the south of the District, RUF/AFRC forces established a camp called "SS Camp" at the boundary between Dama and Nongowa Chiefdoms. From there, they raided all the surrounding villages. Besides looking for food, the main purpose of these raids was to find Kamajors. Many villages were suspected of hosting Kamajors preparing to launch attack on RUF/AFRC positions. RUF/AFRC attacks were also perceived by the population as reprisal to punish the population for failing to support them. Thus, men were stripped naked and RUF/AFRC forces searched for any marks on their bodies indicating they belonged to the Kamajor society, killing those on whose bodies they found such marks. However, not to have any marks did not prevent civilians from being killed, since people were killed on suspicion of being Kamajors or Kamajor collaborators in the absence of such a mark. This practice of undressing men to search for any mark was also carried out in the SS Camp by the Moa River.

Niawa and Langruma Chiefdoms were not attacked by RUF/AFRC forces after the Coup, unlike Small Bo Chiefdom, where SLA forces had been stationed before the Coup.<sup>866</sup> Shortly after the Coup, the commander in charge of the ex-SLA forces in the chiefdom announced that Kamajors should disarm to them as instructed by the high command in Freetown. RUF/AFRC forces launched an attack on Kamajor positions, from which the Kamajors were controlling part of the Bo-Kenema highway in the chiefdom and in Blama in August 1997. In both locations, the Kamajors were overpowered and fled. During this attack, RUF/AFRC forces burnt houses in Blama. Another battle between the two forces took place in Joyomei, a town six miles south of Blama. The town was burnt down, although the force responsible for this burning remains unknown, with Kamajors blaming the RUF/AFRC and vice versa.

During the RUF/AFRC stay in Kenema Town, girls were raped, houses were looted continuously and civilians were harassed for food and other items. Most commonly, alleged Kamajors or alleged SLPP<sup>867</sup> or Kamajor supporters were arrested, detained, beaten and/or killed and their houses looted and burnt.<sup>868</sup> In one incident, a man riding his bicycle on the road to Kenema was brought to the town by RUF/AFRC members and killed in front of the Sierratel Building; his stomach was cut open and his intestines tied across the road as a barricade. Civilians in the town were beaten to death if they were caught listening to the BBC.

In Small Bo Chiefdom, people who were considered to be Kamajor collaborators were severely beaten or killed. RUF/AFRC forces made civilians look for food for them and the pressure on civilians was intensified as RUF/AFRC forces in Small Bo Chiefdom had stopped receiving food and other items from their main base in Kenema. The RUF/AFRC forces believed that civilians were sending information to Kamajors who had gone in the bushes; any food found with civilians was taken away on the grounds that the food would be sent to Kamajors. Furthermore, RUF/AFRC forces used to organise groups of civilians and took them to the bush to look for food. Whatever the quantity of food brought back, it was divided into four parts, one for the forces' High Command, one for the lower ranks, one for the civilian administration and one for the civilians who had brought the food.

<sup>866</sup> Accordingly, the SLA base transformed into an RUF/AFRC base.

<sup>867</sup> Since February 1996, the SLPP party has been the ruling party of Sierra Leone.

<sup>868</sup> No details were gathered for this period but this assertion, although general, was common in the information gathered for Nongowa Chiefdom and beyond the boundaries of the chiefdom.



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Civilians in the chiefdom engaged in mining activities in villages located in the north of the chiefdom, namely in Yorvuhun, Victoria, Komoli, Limeh and Nyagbe Bo. They received food from businessmen from Kenema Town who encouraged the mining. Because of this food supply and because the movement of civilians towards these villages was perceived as sabotage,<sup>869</sup> RUF/AFRC forces established a base at Victoria in the north of the chiefdom, mainly to seize the food and non food items they needed from civilians and to monitor the movement of Kamajors in other chiefdoms located further north. However, RUF/AFRC forces soon also engaged in mining activities.

RUF/AFRC forces were making regular visits to Dama Chiefdom to look for CDF members and to request food from civilians. At Gofor in July 1997, they killed three civilians with automatic rifles and at Bandembu, on the same day, civilians suspected of being CDF supporters were killed. Each time they entered villages, RUF/AFRC asked civilians to locate CDF members, threatening to kill them. Houses and property belonging to suspected CDF supporters were looted and burnt down and some alleged Kamajor collaborators were tortured to death. Also in July, RUF/AFRC forces entering Kpandebu through the east killed 25 civilians, mostly men, and inflicted physical violence on others, whom they alleged to be Kamajor supporters. The following month, RUF/AFRC forces coming from Joru (Gaura Chiefdom) attacked Konia, Gboyama and Manor on the same day and killed an unknown number of civilians in those villages. During this wave of attacks, other villages including Sebehun and Kbakah were also raided and 10 civilians were killed.<sup>870</sup>

The Kamajors regrouped and began attacking RUF/AFRC forces, often by laying ambushes. Captured RUF/AFRC members were killed, frequently on the spot. Across Kenema District, civilians suspected of being a member of the RUF/AFRC forces or a member of their family or a collaborator were killed. For example, at Konia (Dama Chiefdom) in August 1997, one man was shot dead and another was beaten for two days, both on the grounds that they were "not on the side of the CDF".

During the second half of the year, RUF/AFRC forces reached Kandu Leppeama Chiefdom, where there were some incidents of violence inflicted on civilians. At Deima, they killed civilians for their money and property, tortured some who refused to give them their valuables and raped some girls. At Jenneh also, some people were killed. The acting Paramount Chief residing at Levuma was arrested in November 1997 as he had dismantled the checkpoints some RUF/AFRC forces had made in the town.<sup>871</sup>

Throughout the third phase of the conflict, diamond-rich Lower Bambara Chiefdom was the scene of numerous attacks and counter-attacks between RUF/AFRC forces and Kamajors, as a result of which there were many civilian fatalities. In August 1997, RUF/AFRC forces launched attacks on numerous villages including Torkpombu, Buime, Lachun, Kpandebu, Lowoma, Fowaru, Ngeleima, most of them diamond mining villages or towns. Coming from Kenema Town, these heavily armed

<sup>869</sup> This movement of civilians was indeed perceived by RUF/AFRC forces as indicating that civilians had received information of imminent attacks from Kamajors and accordingly civilians were considered as fleeing the area.

<sup>870</sup> It could not be ascertained in which village those 10 civilians were killed.

<sup>871</sup> The acting Paramount Chief subsequently managed to escape into the bush.



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forces fired indiscriminately in the villages as they passed by, shouting the following slogan, called Cyburg: "We don't talk, the barrels talk". During these attacks, many civilians were killed and many houses were burnt. As a result of these attacks, the CDF were driven out of the chiefdom. RUF/AFRC engaged in mining activities almost everywhere, digging plantations without the consent of their owners. If the owners resisted these activities, they were seriously beaten. Civilians were forced to work in the mines and many people died at these sites.

In August also, RUF/AFRC forces planned to attack Punduru, a Kamajor base in the north-east of Gorama Mende Chiefdom. On their way to Punduru, they had an encounter with Kamajors at Bandabu and one of their members was killed during the battle. It is believed that this incident outraged the RUF/AFRC forces and on 30 August, around 700 heavily armed<sup>872</sup> RUF/AFRC members launched a fierce attack on Punduru. During this attack, four Kamajors and 28 civilians were killed.<sup>873</sup> RUF/AFRC forces were however repelled and moved to Sewafe (Nimiyama Chiefdom, Kono District) before burning the whole town and capturing some girls and young boys.

The following month, the Kamajors ambushed a military convoy in Lower Bambara Chiefdom and 20 members of the RUF/AFRC forces were killed and arms and ammunition were seized. In September 1997, Kamajors in Nomo Chiefdom launched an attack on RUF/AFRC forces' positions in Tunkia and Gaura Chiefdoms. Two RUF/AFRC members were captured and their heads chopped off. Any person suspected of being a RUF/AFRC member was killed such as those two men from Joru (Gaura Chiefdom) who were shot in their stomachs while entering Nomo.

That same month, CDF members came to the Court Barrie in Konia and asked the Paramount Chief of Dama where he had put the money he received from RUF/AFRC forces. Denying that he had received such money, the Paramount Chief was arrested, tied up with his hammock, taken away and killed in another village. Later, one man who tried to escape was shot on sight by a CDF member. The CDF commander stated that he was the new Paramount Chief.

In October 1997, the mountain village of Basara (Nongowa Chiefdom) came under RUF/AFRC attack, as it was suspected of being a Kamajor stronghold. The village was surrounded in the early hours of the day and forces opened fire on the civilians. Five civilians were killed during the firing and 15 were put in a hut and burnt alive when the hut was set on fire. In November 1997, the same scenario took place in another mountain village called Masao. Over 10 people were shot dead, while 10 others were forced into a house, which was then set on fire.

Kamajors started regrouping in October 1997 in Dodo Chiefdom and in Panguma (Lower Bambara Chiefdom). Jormu Kefabu (Nongowa Chiefdom) became a CDF stronghold and RUF/AFRC forces made several unsuccessful attempts, mainly in the mountain villages, to drive the Kamajors out. In December 1997, the mountain village of Bambawa (Nongowa Chiefdom), which was believed to be a Kamajor training base, was attacked and burnt and one person was killed. Also in December,

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<sup>872</sup> The RUF/AFRC forces were dressed in combat fatigues with red berets and armed with machine guns, an anti-aircraft gun mounted on a Hilux van, RPGs and automatic rifles.

<sup>873</sup> It is worth noting that throughout this time, the more the Kamajors attacked the RUF/AFRC forces, the more the RUF/AFRC forces were harassing civilians.



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RUF/AFRC forces encountered Kamajors at Combema and about 40 of them were killed by Kamajors.

In November 1997, RUF/AFRC forces attacked Gorahun (Tunkia Chiefdom), seizing the two roads leading to the town. In this attacks, 55 people were killed at close range. After this attack, the chiefdom did not experience further RUF/AFRC attacks.

The following month, the Kamajor commander on the ground in Nomo Chiefdom received a letter from the Kamajor High Command instructing all Kamajors in all chiefdoms to launch Operation "Black December". The purpose of this operation was to restrict the movement of the RUF/AFRC forces by regaining control of the highways. Kamajors from Gorama Mende Chiefdom took part in this operation on the Kono-Makeni highway. During the same month, at Dambala, a suspected "rebel" was decapitated and his blood drunk by a Kamajor.

"Operation Black December"<sup>874</sup> did not take place in Lower Bambara Chiefdom in December 1997. However, a fierce attack was launched on Tongo Field in January 1998, when Kamajors entered the chiefdom from two fronts, namely the east from Malegohun Chiefdom and the west from Dodo Chiefdom. Although few details were obtained on this operation, it was stated more than once that during this attack, many civilians lost their lives. Furthermore, following this attack, both fighting forces attacked villages believed to be under the control of the other force, killing civilians and burning houses. Hanga (Nongowa Chiefdom) was also attacked in January by RUF/AFRC forces. Twelve members of the same family and other inhabitants were shot dead and more than 10 houses were burnt down. Some people were forced to carry looted items for the RUF/AFRC forces, who also attacked other villages along the road from Mano Junction to Kenema Town, including Ngelehun, Kpanderu and Bambawa.<sup>875</sup>

In January 1998, RUF/AFRC forces based in Joru (Gaura Chiefdom) decided to sweep away the Kamajors deployed along the entire route leading to Bo Waterside, on the Liberian border in Pujehun District.<sup>876</sup> Before starting their operation, they sent a letter to the Kamajors to inform them on their plans. On their way, they burnt down many villages<sup>877</sup> and succeeded in driving the Kamajors away. At Jao (Tunkia Chiefdom), over 40 houses were burnt and at Kamasu, 15 houses were burnt. At Gegbwema, where they spent the night, they burnt down all the houses except the mosque and the Court Barrie.

Kamajors from Kandu Leppeama Chiefdom, together with some from Simbaru and Dodo Chiefdoms, planned to launch attacks on RUF/AFRC positions in Kandu Leppeama Chiefdom. However, on 5 January 1998, when they arrived at these positions, RUF/AFRC forces had already

<sup>874</sup> This operation, declared by CDF High Command, was implemented across the country in the areas where Kamajors were active, in a bid to take control of RUF/AFRC positions. As part of this operation, all the highways and roads were blocked, in order to prevent RUF/AFRC forces from attacking civilians. It is believed that this Operation was launched following the AFRC statement that it would not hand over power to the President of Sierra Leone on 22 April 1998, as planned in the Conakry Peace Plan signed on 23 October 1997.

<sup>875</sup> As for the casualties in those villages, it is merely reported that houses were burnt but it cannot be ascertained whether all the villages had houses burnt.

<sup>876</sup> This road passes by Tunkia Chiefdom.

<sup>877</sup> Tilorma, Taninahun, Sokola, Sefula and Damawulo were also burnt down.



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left the area. Kamajors from Kandu Leppeama Chiefdom then controlled the chiefdom, although there were reports of harassment of the civilian population. At Deima, for example, one Kamajor arrested seven civilians and put them in a wooden box which he then locked because they failed to give him food. The matter was reported to the commander at Levuma, who ordered their release.

In January also, the Paramount Chief of Nomo Chiefdom, together with other prominent people, including a prominent doctor and a businessman, were arrested by RUF/AFRC fighters in Kenema Town. They were arrested at the time of a fierce battle between RUF/AFRC forces in the outskirts of Kenema and were accused of supporting Kamajors. They were beaten with sticks with their hands tied behind their backs. One of them is believed to have died in detention although his body was never found. The mutilated body of another was found with 35 others in a mass grave at the outskirts of the town. Some of those arrested were however released.<sup>878</sup>

At Konjo (Dama Chiefdom) in early 1998, a pregnant woman was raped by member(s) of the RUF/AFRC forces and gave birth shortly after. During the same attack, civilians were punished<sup>879</sup> or killed, suspected of being SLPP and Kamajor supporters. Some houses were also put down.

When they withdrew from Kenema in January 1998,<sup>880</sup> over 10 RUF/AFRC members and their families who took the Nomo Chiefdom road to go to Liberia were shot dead by some Kamajors in Nomo Chiefdom while crossing the river that borders Sierra Leone and Guinea in a canoe. Due to the shooting of the canoe, it sank, which resulted in the drowning of a suckling mother and her baby with other people. At Faama (Nomo Chiefdom), Kamajors shot dead an unknown number of "rebel sympathisers".

As Blama (Small Bo Chiefdom) was a stronghold of RUF/AFRC forces, Kamajors from Dodo and Kandu Leppeama Chiefdoms on the one hand and from Niawa Chiefdom, Wunde Chiefdom (Bo District) and Jiamia Bongor Chiefdom (Bo District) on the other hand started operations to dislodge RUF/AFRC forces from Small Bo Chiefdom. On 31 January 1998, Kamajors from Dodo Chiefdom advanced towards Small Bo and on their way, launched a successful attack on RUF/AFRC forces based at Levuma (Kandu Leppeama Chiefdom). Kamajors from Dodo Chiefdom, with those from Kandu Leppeama Chiefdom, advanced on Blama, entering the town on 15 February 1998. However, no RUF/AFRC forces were to be found in the town as they had left earlier.

In February 1998, ECOMOG troops based in Liberia entered the District and on 18 February, together with Kamajors, reached Kenema Town. They then deployed at SS Camp, Gofor, Giema and Joru (in Dama and Gaura Chiefdoms). Indeed, after the intervention in Freetown, ECOMOG forces had positions all over the country and were working with the Kamajors. In Malegohun Chiefdom, for example, ECOMOG came to Kamajor positions with arms and ammunitions. In addition, ECOMOG requested the intervention of the Kamajors from Punduru (Gorama Mende

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<sup>878</sup> Many reports mention that the arrest of those people and the reported killings were carried out under a direct order from a senior member of the RUF general staff.

<sup>879</sup> The kind of punishment inflicted could not be ascertained.

<sup>880</sup> Indeed, RUF/AFRC forces stayed in Kenema town throughout 1997 until late January 1998 when, fearing the imminent Kamajor/ECOMOG forces' attack, they pulled out of the town.